

PETER  
THE WHALER



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# PETER THE WHALER

*By*

W. H. G. KINGSTON

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# PETER THE WHALER

HIS EARLY LIFE AND ADVENTURES IN THE ARCTIC  
REGIONS

## CHAPTER I

"PETER," said my father, with a stern look, though the tone of his voice had more of sorrow in it than anger, "this conduct, if you persist in it, will bring ruin on you, and grief and shame on my head and to your mother's heart. Where did they come from?" He pointed, as he spoke, to several head of game—pheasants, partridges, and hares—which lay on the ground, while I stood before him leaning on my gun, my eyes not daring to meet his. My two dogs crouched at my feet, looking as if they also were culprits, and fully comprehended the tenor of his voice.

My father was a clergyman, the vicar of a large parish in the south of Ireland, where the events I am now narrating took place. He was a tall man, with silvery locks and well-formed features. I think his hair was prematurely grey. He was a kind parent, and was on good terms with almost everybody. That, however, we had some foes, I shall have occasion presently to show. But I must return to the scene I was describing. I may be pardoned for first giving a slight sketch of myself. I hope that I may escape being accused of vanity, as I shall not dwell on my personal appearance. I believe that I inherited some of my parents' good looks; but the hardships I have endured have eradicated all traces of them. I was well grown for my age (I was barely fifteen) but, dressed in my loose shooting costume, my countenance ruddy with fresh air and exercise, I looked much older.

"What do you suppose would be the lot of a poor man's son if he were to be discovered acting as you are constantly doing in spite of my warnings and commands?" continued my father. "I tell you, boy, that the consequences may and will be lamentable; and do not



believe that because you are the son of a gentleman, you can escape the punishment due to the guilty.

"You are a poacher—you deserve the name; and on some occasion, when engaged on that lawless occupation, you will probably encounter the gamekeepers of the persons on whose estates you are trespassing, and whose property you are robbing. Now hear me out. They, as in duty bound, will attempt to capture you. You and your companions may resist; your weapons may be discharged, and life may be sacrificed. If you escape the fate of a murderer, you may be transported to distant lands, away from friends, home, and country, to work for long years—perhaps in chains among the outcasts of our race, fed on the coarsest food, subject to the tyranny of brutalised overseers, often themselves convicts; your ears forced to listen to the foulest language, your eyes to witness the grossest debauchery, till you yourself become as bad as those with whom you are compelled to herd; so that when the time of your punishment is expired, you will be unfit for freedom; and if you venture to return home, you will find yourself, wherever you appear, branded with dishonour, and pointed at as the convict.

"Think, Peter, of the grief and anguish it would cause your poor mother and me. Think of the shame it would bring on the name of our family. People would point at your sisters, and say, 'Their brother is a convict!' They would shake their heads as I appeared in the pulpit, and whisper, 'The vicar whose son was transported!' But more than all think how God will judge you, who have had opportunities of knowing better, who have been repeatedly warned that you are doing wrong, who are well aware that you are doing wrong; think how He will judge and condemn you.

"Human laws, of necessity, are framed only to punish all alike, the rich and educated man as well as the poor and ignorant; but God, who sees what is in the heart of man, will more severely punish those who sin, as you do, with their eyes open. I am unwilling to employ threats—I would rather appeal to your better feelings, my boy; but I must, in the first place, take away your means of following your favourite pursuit. And should you persist in leading your present wild and idle life, I must adopt



such measures as will effectually prevent you. Give me your gun."

I listened to all that was said in dogged silence. I could not refuse to give up my dearly-beloved weapon; but I did so with a very bad grace; and I am sorry to say that my father's words had at that time little or no effect on my heart. I say, at the time; for afterwards, when it was too late, I thought of them over and over again, and deeply repented of my wilful obstinacy and folly.

Alas! from how much suffering and grief I should have been saved had I attended to the precepts and warnings of my kind parent—how much of bitter self-reproach! And I must warn my young friends that, although the adventures I went through may be found very interesting to read about, they would discover the reality to be very full of pain and wretchedness were they subjected to it. And yet I may tell them that the physical suffering I endured was as nothing when compared to the anguish of mind I felt, when, left for hours and days to my own bitter thoughts, I remembered that through my own perverseness I had brought it all upon myself.

My parents had four sons and five daughters. My eldest brother was studying for the bar in Dublin; and as the family fortune was limited, we were somewhat cramped to afford him the requisite means for his education. I was consequently kept at home, picking up, when I felt disposed, any crumbs of knowledge which came in my way, but seldom going out of my way to find them; nor had I, unfortunately, any plan fixed on for my future career.

My mother was constantly employed with my sisters, and my father with his clerical duties or his literary pursuits; so that I was forgotten, and allowed to look after myself. Consequently I ran wild, and became acquainted with some scampish youths in every way my inferiors except in age; and they gave me lessons which I was, I own, too willing to learn, in all that was bad.

Sporting was my greatest amusement; and, for my age, I was perhaps one of the best shots in all the country round. While I confined myself to my father's glebe, and to the grounds of two or three friends who had given me leave to shoot, he did not object to my indulging



my propensity ; but, not content with so narrow a sphere of action, I used frequently, in company of some of the youths I speak of, to wander over property where I not only had no right to kill game, but where I had positively been forbidden to trespass, and where I even knew people were on the look-out to detect me. I had just returned from one of these lawless expeditions when the scene I have just described took place.

For two days I sulked, and would speak to no one. On the third I set off to take a walk by myself, across the bogs, and over the hills in the far distance. I had got into a better spirit from the fresh air and exercise ; and I truly believe that I was beginning to see my error, and was resolving to do my best to make amends for it, and to give up my bad habits, when who should I encounter but Pat Doolan, one of the wildest of my wild acquaintances !

Before a word of salutation had passed, he asked me why I had not got my gun with me ; and after a weak and vain endeavour to avoid answering the question, I confessed all that had occurred. He sneered at my fears and my father's warnings, and laughed away all my half-formed good resolutions. Unhappy, indeed, it was for me that I listened to the voice of the tempter, for he very speedily overcame all my scruples ; and I undertook to get back my gun at all cost, and to join him on the following morning on a shooting expedition on the property of a nobleman, some part of which was seen from the hill where we had posted ourselves.

The property on which we had resolved to poach was owned by Lord Fetherston. We knew that he maintained but few keepers, and that those were not very vigilant. He also, we believed, was away from the country, so that we had no fears of being detected.

I said that my father had few enemies. For some reason or other, however, Lord Fetherston was one ; I did not know why ; and this fact Doolan, who was well aware of it, took care to bring forward in justification of the attack we purposed to make on his property. I should have known that it was no justification whatever ; but when people want reasons for committing a bad act, they are obliged to make very bad ones serve their purpose.



Pat Doolan, my senior by three years, was the son of a man who was nominally a small farmer, but in reality a smuggler, and the owner of an illicit distillery. He produced some bread and meat and whisky, of which latter he made me drink no small quantity, and he then accompanied me towards my home, in sight of which he left me, with a promise to meet him on the same spot at daybreak on the following morning.

Even that very evening, as I sat with my book in my hand pretending to read, in the same room the family occupied, and listened to the cheerful voices of my light-hearted, innocent sisters, I began to repent of my engagement to Doolan; but the fear of his laughing at me, made me resolve to adhere to it.

## CHAPTER II

THAT night was far from a happy one, for I knew all the time that I was doing what was very wrong. I waited till I thought my father and all the household were asleep; and then, with the sensations I should think a thief experiences when about to commit a robbery, I crept along the dark passage towards his dressing-room. The moonlight was streaming on the coveted weapon. I grasped it eagerly, and silently beat my retreat.

Sleep I could not; so, carefully closing the door, I spent the remainder of the night in cleaning my gun and getting ready for my excursion. I got out of the house without being perceived, and, closing the door behind me, even before the time agreed on, I reached the spot where I was to meet Doolan. A hoar-frost lay on the grass, the air was pure and bracing, my gun was in my hand, and plenty of powder and shot in my belt; and this, with the exercise and excitement, enabled me to cast away all regrets for my conduct, and all fear for the result.

Doolan's loud cheer, as we met, raised my spirits still more, and away we trudged, gaily enough, towards the scene of our intended sport. He laughed and talked incessantly, without giving me a moment for thought, so



that when we reached the ground I was ready for anything. A hare crossed my path. It belonged, I knew, to Lord Fetherston. I fired, knocked it over, and bagged it; and while Doolan was applauding me, a pheasant was put up, and in like manner transferred to my game-bag. Never before had we enjoyed such capital sport, till weary with our exercise, we sat down to partake of the provisions, not forgetting a whisky bottle, which my companion had brought with him. While we were eating, he amused me with an account of an intended run of smuggled goods which was to be made on the coast two nights hence; and without much difficulty I agreed to join the party who were to assist in landing the things, and in carrying them up the country to the places where they were to be concealed.

After breakfast we resumed our sport. Our game-bags were full and very heavy, and even we were content. My companion at last proposed to return home. "Home!" I remarked, unconsciously. "How can I return home? How can I face my father after having thus disobeyed him?" I thought. This feeling had not before occurred to me. I already repented what I had done. "I can't go home now," said I to Doolan, aloud.

"Why not?" said he; "you've a mighty fine faste to place before your dad; and, faith, if he's a sensible man, he'll ax no questions how you came by it." Such were my companions notions of morality; and in this instance he spoke what he thought was the truth, for he had been taught no better, and he knew that thus his own father would have acted.

"It won't do; I cannot look my father in the face, and must go to your house now; and I will creep home at night, when there's no one to see me."

"Well, Pater, you must do as you like," he said, laughing; "you're mighty welcome to come to our house and to stay there as long as you please; at the same time I see no reason at all, at all, why your dad shouldn't be glad to see such an illigant stock of game for his dinner."

"I know my father better than you do, Pat," said I, for the first time in my life asserting a little determination with him. "Home I will not go this day."

So it was settled; and we were bending our steps in



the direction of Doolan's house, through Lord Fetherston's property, when another pheasant got up before me. My gun was loaded, and I could not resist the temptation to fire. The bird fell, and I was running forward to pick it up, when three persons appeared suddenly from a path through a copse close to me. Doolan, who was a little in advance, ran off as fast as his legs could carry him, throwing away his game-bag in his fright, and leaving me to take care of myself as I best could. Two of the strangers whom I guessed to be keepers by their dress—indeed, one I knew by sight—rushed forward and seized me roughly by the collar.

"What are you doing here, you young scamp?" exclaimed one of them. "Killing our lord's game, and caught in the act," he added, picking up the still fluttering bird. "Come along, and we'll see what he has to say to you."

The other immediately made chase after my companion; but Doolan ran very fast, and was in good wind, which the keeper was not, so that the former soon distanced him. The keeper gave up the chase, calculating that, having caught one of us, he should be able to lay hands on the other whenever he chose.

On his return, with many a cuff he dragged me along towards the third person I spoke of, and whom I at once recognised as Lord Fetherston himself. He did not remember me; but the keepers did, I suspect, from the first.

"What is your name, youngster?" said his lordship, in a severe tone.

I told him, with the shame I felt strongly depicted on my countenance.

"I am sorry to hear it," he replied. "And that of your companion?"

"Pat Doolan, my lord." I said this with no vindictive feeling, or with any idea of excusing myself; but I was asked a question, and without considering what might be the result, I answered it.

"A pretty companion for the son of the vicar of——. Take away his gun, O'Rourke," he said to the keeper, "and the game; to that he has no right. And now, young gentleman, I shall see your father on this matter shortly. If he chooses to let his son commit depredations on my property, he must take the consequences."

"I came out without my father's knowledge, and he is in



no way to blame," I answered quickly ; for I could not bear to have any reflection cast on my father through my fault.

Lord Fetherston looked at me attentively, and I think I heard him muttering something like, " He is a brave lad, and must be rescued from such companionship " but I am not quite certain.

" Well, sir, you at all events must not escape punishment," he replied aloud. " For the present, I leave you in the custody of my keepers. You see the condition to which you have reduced yourself."

He then gave some orders to one of the keepers, which I did not hear ; and without further noticing me he walked on, while they led me away towards Fetherston Abbey, his lordship's residence.

Lord Fetherston was a magistrate, and consequently in the Abbey there was a strong room, in which, on occasion, prisoners were locked up before they were carried off to jail. Into this room I was led, and with a heavy heart I heard the key turned in the lock, and found myself alone.

Two days passed ; my obstinate spirit was completely broken, and I must say that I truly had repented of all my folly and idleness. On the third day the door opened, and my father appeared. He looked very sad, but not angry. He took a chair and sat down, while I stood before him. For more than a minute he could not speak.

" Peter," he at length said, " I do not come to reproach you ; the grief I and your mother feel, and what you will have to endure henceforth, will be, I trust, sufficient punishment. We must part with you, my son ; we have no choice. You must go to foreign lands, and there retrieve your name, and I trust, improve and strengthen your character. You have placed yourself and me in Lord Fetherston's power. He insists on it—that you shall forthwith be sent to sea ; and on that condition he promises to overlook all that has occurred. He did not even speak harshly of you ; and I am fain to believe that what he has decided is for the best. At my earnest solicitation, he consented that you should take only a short voyage first, to North America, provided that you sail without delay. Accordingly, I have agreed to set off to-morrow with you for Liverpool, whence many ships sail for that part of the world, and I daresay that



I shall find some captain to take charge of you. Do you consent to abide by this arrangement?"

"I think Lord Fetherston is right," I replied. "The life of a sailor, if what I know of it is correct (little in truth did I know of it), will just suit me; and though I regret to go as I am going, and grieve to wound my mother's heart, yet I consider that I am very leniently dealt with, and will gladly accept the conditions." So it was settled, and my father led me out of my prison.

### CHAPTER III

ARRIVED at Liverpool, we went to an inn, and my father immediately set out with me to inquire among the ship-brokers what ships were sailing for British North America.

"You shall go to an English colony, Peter," said my father. "Wherever you wander, my son, remember you are a Briton, and cease not to love your native land."

Had my father known more of the world, I am inclined to think that he would have waited till he could procure an introduction to some respectable ship-owner, who would have selected a good honest captain with whom to place me. Instead of so doing, he walked into several offices by chance, over which he saw written "Shipping Agent and Broker." Some had no ships going to the British North American ports, others did not know of any captains who would take charge of a raw youngster like me. At last a broker into whose office we entered, informed us that he was agent for one of the first emigrant ships which would sail that year; that her captain was a very superior man, a great friend of his; and that he doubted not for a small premium he would take charge of me. Mr. John Cruden, our new friend, insurance broker and general shipping agent, was a very polite man, and extremely soft-spoken; but he was of an extremely inquisitive disposition, I thought, for he asked my father numberless questions. I found he was trying to discover what amount of premium my father was likely to be able to pay, that he might ask accordingly.

The office in which we stood was very small for the



large amount of business Mr. Cruden informed us he transacted in it, and very dark ; and so dirty that I thought it could never have been cleaned out.

" You will doubtless like to make the acquaintance of Captain Elihu Swales, Mr. Lefroy," said Mr. Cruden. " I expect him here every instant, and I shall then have the pleasure of introducing him to you, and we can arrange matters forthwith. You will find him, sir, a very amiable excellent man—indeed you will, sir, a very proper guardian for a young man."

Whether this description was correct or not I had then no means of judging. The subject of this eulogium appeared while it was being uttered ; indeed I suspect he heard a portion of it, for, suddenly turning my head, I saw a man, whom I instinctively suspected to be the captain. Had I not turned, I think he would have burst forth outright into laughter. I must remark that my father's back was towards him, and that Mr. Cruden, unless he was very near-sighted, could scarcely have helped seeing when he came in.

" Ah ! there is my excellent friend," observed the agent, when he perceived that I had discovered the captain, " Mr. Lefroy, allow me to introduce Captain Swales to you. Captain Swales, this gentleman has a son whom he wishes to send to sea. You will take charge of the lad. You will be a second father to him. I can depend on you. Say the word, and all parties will come to terms."

" Day, sir ! " said Captain Swales, making as if he would take off his hat, which he did not. He was a very respectable man, as far as dress went ; that is to say, he was clothed in a suit of black cloth, with a black silk handkerchief—nothing very remarkable, certainly ! most masters and mates of merchantmen wear such on shore. His figure was short and square, there was nothing rounded about him ; his features were all angular ; and though there was a good deal of him, it was all bone and sinew. His countenance was brown, with a deep tinge of red superadded ; and as for his features, they were so battered and seamed with winds and weather, that it was difficult to discern their expression. I remember, however, that the first glance I caught of his eye, as it looked inquiringly towards Mr. Cruden, I did not like, even though at the time he was smiling.



" You wish to send your son to sea, sir ? " he continued to my father. " As Mr. Cruden says, I'll look after him as if he was my own boy, sir. I'll keep him from mischief, sir. Lads always get into mischief if they can ; but with me, sir, they can't—I don't let 'em. I look after them, sir ; and when they knows my eye is on them, they behaves themselves. That's my principle, sir ; and now you know me."

He said this in an off-hand, bluff, hearty way, which made my father fully believe that he had fallen in with a prize—indeed, that he was supremely fortunate in having secured so kind a protector for me. It was finally arranged that he was to pay Captain Elihu Swales the sum of fifteen pounds, in consideration of which, in addition to any service I could be of, I was to mess at his table, and to learn what I could of a seaman's duty, till the ship returned to Liverpool.

The *Black Swan*, the name of Captain Elihu Swales' ship, would not be ready for sea for some days, he informed my father ; and till she was so, as he was compelled to return home immediately, Mr. Cruden kindly undertook to board and lodge me at the rate of twelve shillings a week. I was to go on board the *Black Swan* every day, to see if I was wanted ; and I was to return to Mr. Cruden's in the afternoon, or when I was not wanted. My father considered this a very admirable arrangement, and was perfectly confident that he had done the best circumstances would allow, and that he had left me in safe and honourable hands.

We spent most of the afternoon in purchasing a sea-chest and an outfit for me, according to a list furnished by Mr. Cruden, to whose office my traps were transferred forthwith. We did not go down to see the *Black Swan*, because Captain Swales said she was a long way off, and was not fit to receive visitors, but that she would be in a few days. He then remarked that she was one of the finest and fastest craft out of Liverpool. " Nothing could beat the *Black Swan* when she had a mind to put her best foot foremost." I was wondering whether ships really had feet. I afterwards found that this was a figurative way of expressing that she sailed fast. These observations were made when we returned with my chest to Mr. Cruden's, where we again met my future captain ; and



when the sum agreed on for my voyage was paid into the hands of the first-named person, my father's heart was softened towards me; and after he had exhausted all the good advice he could think of, and had given me several useful books, and many little articles of his own property, he made me a present of six pounds as pocket-money, and to purchase anything I might wish to bring back from America. The next morning my poor father returned by the steamer to Dublin. He was gone, and I was left alone in the big world to look after myself, with little more experience of its ways than a child.

## CHAPTER IV

WHEN my father was gone, I went back to Mr. Cruden's office, and asked him to tell me where I could find his house, at which I understood I was to lodge.

He looked up from the book in which he was writing, with an air of surprise, and replied: "You are mistaken, my lad, if you suppose that I am about to introduce into the bosom of my family one of whom I know nothing. Your father is a very respectable man, I daresay, and you may be a very estimable youth, for what I know; but it is generally a different sort who are sent to sea as you are being sent; and therefore it is just possible you may be a wild young scamp, whose face his friends may never wish to behold again."

I blushed as he said this, and looked confused; for my conscience told me that he spoke the truth.

"Ah! I guessed I was right," he continued. "Now, to answer your question. While you remain on shore, which won't be for long, you may swing your hammock in the loft over this office; and for cooking, you won't require much of that. This will break you in by degrees for the life you've to lead, and will do you good, my lad. So I hope you will be grateful."

From the determined manner he had about him, I supposed all was right; and had it been otherwise, my spirits at that time were too low to allow me to remonstrate. I asked him next if I could not go on board the *Black Swan*, to make myself useful.



He gave a peculiar smile, the meaning of which I did not comprehend at the time, as he replied : " By all means. You will probably find Captain Swales on board—at all events his first mate ; and you may offer your valuable services to them. When they have done with you, you may come back here. By keeping along the quays to the right, you cannot miss the ship if you ask for her."

I had scarcely fancied that there were so many ships in the world as I saw crowded together in the Liverpool docks, as I passed through them for the first time in my life. I inquired for the *Black Swan* of the seamen and porters loitering about the quays, but I did not get very satisfactory answers. Some told me that she was drunk last night, and had not got up yet. Others said she had sailed yesterday, for they had seen her dropping down with the tide. The boatmen invariably wanted me to take a boat to look for her, as the only chance I had of finding her ; but I saw that they were trying to impose on me, and passed on. At last, when I had got very near to the west end of the docks, I asked a man whom I saw standing in a meditative mood, with his hands in his pockets, if he could tell me where the *Black Swan* was to be found.

" Why, I calculate, if you look right before your nose, young one, you'll see her as big as life," he answered, pointing to a large ship lying along the quay, on board which a number of men were employed about the rigging ; while others, with a peculiar song, were hoisting in the cargo. I found that the first were riggers, and that the others were dock porters, and that neither belonged to the ship—the regular crew, with the exception of two mates and the cook, not being engaged till just before the ship was ready for sea.

There was something very peculiar about the man who had pointed out the ship to me. He wore a straw hat with a very broad brim, a nankeen jacket, though the weather was still cold, Flushing trousers, which did not nearly reach to his ankles, and a waistcoat of fur—of beaver, I believe, or of wild cat. He had a very long face, and lantern jaws. His nose was in proportion, and it curled down in a way which gave it a most facetious expression ; while a very bright, small pair of eyes had also a sort of constant laugh in them, though the rest of



his features looked as if they could never smile. His complexion had a very leathery look, and his figure was tall and lank in the extreme. I could not have said whether he was an old or a young man by his appearance.

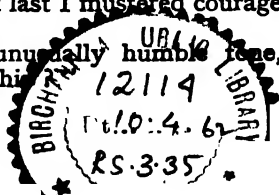
"Well, there's the ship," he observed, seeing that I was looking at him instead of going on board. "Do you know me now?" with an emphasis on the *do*. "That's kind now, to acknowledge an old friend. We was raised together, I guess; only you wasn't weaned till last summer, when the grass was dried up."

I saw that he was laughing at me; but as I felt that I had been rude in staring at him, I said I begged his pardon, but that he made a mistake in supposing we were acquainted, unless he had visited the south of Ireland, seeing that I had never been out of that part of the country before. This seemed to amuse him mightily, for he gave way to a quiet and very peculiar laugh, which I heard as I passed on towards the ship.

There was a plank placed from the quay to the deck of the ship, and by means of it I stepped on board the *Black Swan*. No one took any notice of me, so that I had time to look about me. She was a ship of some eight hundred tons burthen, though she was advertised as of twelve hundred. She had a raised poop, aft, which I may describe as an additional house above the deck, the doors of which opened on the deck. There was a similar raised place forward, called the topgallant forecastle. Under the latter the seamen and mate lived, while the captain and passengers inhabited the poop. The space between decks was open fore and aft, and fitted up with standing bedplaces. This was for the abode of the poorer class of emigrants. The hold, the remaining portion of the ship below the main deck, was filled with cargo and provisions.

All this I discovered afterwards, for at first everything appeared to my sight an inextricable mass of confusion and disorder. After watching for some time, I observed a man whom I concluded was the first mate, by the way he ordered the other people about and the air of authority which he assumed; so at last I mustered courage to go up to him.

"Please, sir," said I, in an unusually humble tone, "are you the first mate of the ship?"





"Well, if I am, and what then?" was his not very courteous answer.

"Why, it's settled that I'm to go in this ship to learn to be a sailor, so I've come on board at once to make myself useful," I replied.

He eyed me curiously from head to foot as if I was some strange animal, and then burst into a loud laugh. "You learn to be a sailor!—you make yourself useful!—you chaw-bacon. Why, the hay-seed is still sticking in your hair, and the dust ain't off your shoes yet. What can you do now?" he asked.

I confessed that I knew nothing about a ship, except the machinery of a steamer, which I had examined in my passage across from Dublin; but that I would learn as fast as I could.

"And so you are a young gentleman, are you?" he continued, without attending to my observations. "Sent to sea to learn manners! Well, we'll soon knock your gentility out of you, let me tell you. Howsomdever, we don't want no help here, so be off on shore again; and when you meet John Smith, just ask him to take you a walk through the town, and not to bring you back to make yourself useful till the ship's ready for sea, d'ye hear, or you'll wish you'd stayed away, that's all."

I must say that even at that time I thought such a man was not fit to be placed in command of others, yet I am sorry to say that I met many others no better fitted to act as officers. I did not answer him; and though I did not understand what he meant about John Smith, I comprehended enough of his observations to judge that it would be more advantageous for me to keep out of his way; so I walked along the plank again to the quay. There was the man I have described, standing as complacently as ever. As smoking is not allowed in the docks, for fear of fire, he was chewing.

"And so, young 'un, you've done your business on board; and what are you going to do next?" he asked, as he saw me sauntering along. I felt that there was a kind tone in his voice, so I told him that I had nothing to do, as the mate of the *Black Swan* did not require my services.

One question led on to another, and he very soon wormed my whole history out of me. "And your



name is Peter Lefroy, is it? Then mine's Silas Flint, at your service. And now, as neither of us has anything to do, we'll go and help each other; so come along." Saying this, he led the way out of the dock.

I wondered who Mr. Silas Flint could be, and yet I had no mistrust in him. From his manner, and the tone of his voice, I thought he was honest, and meant me no harm; and my heart, I must own, yearned for companionship. He did not leave me long in doubt; for after I had told him everything I had to tell about my previous life, he began to be equally communicative about himself. "You see, Peter, I've secured my passage in the *Black Swan*, so we shall be fellow-voyagers; and as I've taken a sort of liking to you, I hope we shall be friends. I come from 'Merica, over there, though I don't belong to the part's she's going to; but you see I've got some business at Quebec, and so I'm going there first." I cannot pretend to give his peculiar and quaint phraseology.

I soon learned that he was raised, as he called it, in the Western States of America; that he had spent much of his life as a hunter and trapper, though he was a man of some little substance; that, having accidentally seen an advertisement in the paper, stating that if the heirs of the late Josiah Flint, of Barnet, in the County of Hertfordshire, England, would apply to Messrs. Grub & Gull, Fleece Court, Chancery Lane, London, they would hear of something to their advantage—he, believing himself to be a descendant of the said Josiah, had come over to hear the welcome news. He remarked, with his peculiar smile, that he had *heard* a great deal which might be very advantageous to him, and which might or might not be true, but that he had got nothing—that he had established his undoubted claim to be one of the heirs of the said Josiah, but that he had fifty cousins, who had turned up in all directions, and whom he would never otherwise have had the happiness of knowing. The gain in this case did not seem great, as they none of them showed any cousinly affection, but did their best to prove that he was an impostor. Thus all the share of his grandfather's property went in law expenses; and he was going back to the land of his father's adoption considerably poorer than he came, and in no loving humour with England and his English cousins.



Such is the brief outline that Silas Flint gave me of his history, as we strolled together through the streets of Liverpool. If, however, I continue describing all the characters I met, and all the strange things I saw, I shall never get on with my history. Silas made a confession which much pleased me. It was, that although he had lived many years in the world, he still felt that he had much to learn, and was constantly doing things he wished to undo ; the last was paying his money for his passage, before he had made any inquiries about the ship. He hinted that Mr. Cruden was not as honest as he might be ; that he suspected Captain Swales was no better ; and that the way the poor emigrants who had come to Liverpool from all parts to go by the ship were treated, was most shameful.

He told me that, in the first place they were attracted there by advertisements long before the ship was ready for sea, partly that the ship-brokers might make certain of having the ship filled, and not a little for the benefit of the inns and lodging-house keepers. As soon as they arrived—most of them absurdly ignorant of what was to be done, and of the necessities required for the voyage—they were pounced upon by a set of harpies, who misled them in every possible way, and fleeced them without mercy.

Silas Flint took me round to a number of our intended fellow-voyagers ; and we found them loud in their complaints of the treatment they had received. Among them were a great many of my countrymen. They were generally the most forlorn and heartbroken, though they had indeed little to leave behind ; but then the slightest incidents would make them forget their grief, and clap their hands, with shouts of laughter. The sorrow of the English was less loud ; but it took much more, I observed, to make them smile.

It was very late in the day when I returned to the office. Mr. Cruden was about to go away. He told me, that as I had chosen to be absent at the dinner hour, I must be content with what I could get ; and he pointed to some musty bread and cheese, and a glass of sour turbid-looking ale, which stood on the desk. I was, however, too hungry to refuse it ; so I ate it as soon as he was gone. An old porter had charge of the premises, and he now beckoned me to follow him to a sort of loft



or lumber-room over the office, where he had slung a hammock, which he told me I might sleep in, or I might, if I liked, sleep on the bare boards outside. "The hammock's more comfortable than it looks, young 'un, so I'd advise you to try it," he remarked; and I found his remark true. As I was very tired, I was glad to turn in early and forget my sorrows in sleep. The next day I fared no better than the first, and all the time I boarded with Mr. Cruden the only variation in my food from bread and cheese was hard biscuits and very doubtful-looking pork and beef. When I told Silas Flint of the treatment I had received, he shrugged his shoulders.

"Can you mend it?" he asked.

I told him that I could complain.

"To whom?" he said. "You have no one to complain to—no friend in the place. Now let me advise you to do as I do. When you can't cure a thing, grin and bear it; but if you see your way out of a fix, then go tooth and nail at it, and don't let anything stop you till you're clear. That's my maxim, youngster; but there's no use kicking against the pricks—it wears out one's shoes, and hurts the feet into the bargain. Now, soon after I took my passage in this here *Black Swan*, I guessed I had made a mistake; but what would have been the use of my going to law about it? I knowed better. I should only have sent my last dollar to look after the many which have gone to prove I was first cousin to a set of people who would all rather have heard my father was drowned years ago than have set eyes on me. I tell you, Peter, you must grin and bear it, and you'll have to do many things as you get through life."

The chief portion of every day, for a week before the ship was reported ready for sailing, I passed with my new-found friend; and, as may be supposed, I did not again offer my valuable services to the mate of the *Black Swan*, nor was any inquiry made after me by her worthy captain.

## CHAPTER V

At last I was informed by Mr. Cruden that I might transfer my chest and myself on board the *Black Swan*. Accordingly, the old porter wheeled the former



down to the docks, while I walked by its side. I gave the old porter a shilling for his trouble; his eye brightened, and he blessed me, and muttered something about wishing that I had fallen into better hands; but he was afraid, apparently, of saying more, and, casting another glance at me, I suspect of commiseration, he tottered off to his daily duties. My chest, which was a very small one, was stowed away by one of the seamen under a bunk in the forecastle. I thought that I was to have a cabin under the poop, and to mess with the captain; but when I made enquiries, no one could give any information, and the captain was nowhere to be seen. Everything on board appeared in the wildest confusion; and I must own that I got most unaccountably in everybody's way, and accordingly got kicked out of it without the slightest ceremony.

Silas had not arrived, so I could not go to him for information. I therefore climbed up out of the way, to the boat, placed amidships, on the top of the booms. Soon afterwards the emigrants' bag and baggage began to arrive. I was amused by observing the odd and mixed collection of things the poor people brought with them, some of the more bulky articles of which were not admitted on board. Jew harpies were on the quays ready to snap them up, giving little or nothing in return.

We lay out in the stream for another whole day, with the "Blue Peter" flying, to show that we were ready for sea, and to summon any passengers who might yet remain on shore. Silas Flint was one of the last to come on board before we left the dock. He appeared, following a porter who wheeled down his chest containing all his property. He did not even give me a look of recognition as he passed me; but he at once plunged below with his chest, and he studiously avoided coming near me. This I thought odd and unkind, nor could I comprehend the cause of this behaviour.

I was sitting very disconsolate by myself among the emigrants, and wondering when the captain would come on board, and when I should begin to learn to be a seaman, when I felt the no-pleasing sensation of a rope's end laid smartly across my shoulders. I turned quickly round to resent the indignity, when I encountered the stern glance of the first mate, Mr. Stovin, fixed on me, while the



"colt" in his hand showed that he was the aggressor. "And so you are the youngster who wanted to make himself useful, are you?" he exclaimed in a sneering voice.

"I am," I replied; "and I'll thank you in future not to take such liberties with my back."

He burst into a loud laugh. "Oh, my young cock-a-hoop, you show fight, do you?" he exclaimed. "Well, we'll see what you are made of before long."

"I'm ready to do my duty when you show me the way," I answered, in as calm a voice as I could command; and I believe this reply, and the having kept my temper, gave him a more favourable opinion of me than he was before inclined to form, and somewhat softened his savage nature.

"A willing hand will have no want of masters," he observed. "And mind, what I tell you to do, you'll do as well as you can, and we shan't fall foul of each other."

I will now describe the *Black Swan*. She measured nearly eight hundred tons, was ship-rigged, and had been built many years. She carried eighteen hands forward, with two cooks and a steward, besides the captain, four mates, and a doctor.

There were about four hundred and forty steerage passengers, who, I may explain, are the poorer classes; and I think there were ten cabin passengers, who berthed in the cabin and messed with the captain. The steerage passengers brought their own provisions, but the captain was obliged to provide them with water and biscuit, just to keep life in them; indeed, without it many of them would have died. It was, I felt, like severing the last link which bound us to our native shores, when the pilot left us at the mouth of the Mersey, and with a fair wind we stood down the Irish Channel. The wind having veered round to the north-east, the captain ordered the ship to be kept away before it. His eye happened to fall upon me for the first time, dressed in my sea toggery, and seated, with my hands in my pockets, on the booms.

"Hillo, Jim—what's-your-name—we'll have none of your idling ways here if you belong to this ship, as I've a notion you do," he exclaimed. "Aloft there with you, then, and help furl the mizzen top-sail. Be smart about it, or I'll freshen your way with a rope's end, and we'll see if you give me an answer."



By this last observation I guessed that the mate had told him of the answer I had given him, and I felt that the wisest thing I could do was to obey him without making any reply. What, however, he meant by "furling the mizzen top-sail" I had not the slightest notion; but as I saw that he pointed to the mizzen-mast, and that several lads and men were ascending the mizzen rigging, I followed them. I was a good climber, so I had no fear of going aloft; and while I was in the top, luckily one of my new messmates, who was already lying out on the yard exclaimed, "Hillo, Peter, lend us a hand here, my lad." On hearing this, I immediately threw myself on the yard, and following his directions, I made a very fair furl of it. I got no praise certainly for this, but I escaped blame; and I saw by the way the other mizzen-top men treated me, that they considered me a smart lad, and no flincher.

From that moment I was never idle. I followed a piece of advice honest Dick Derrick gave me on this occasion: "Never let go with one hand till you've got a good grip with the other; and if you cannot hold on with your hands, make use of your teeth and legs; and mind, clutch fast till you've picked out a soft spot to fall on." Dick Derrick taught me to hand, furl, and steer, to knot and splice, to make sinnet and spun-yarn, and the various other parts of a seaman's business. I was ambitious to learn; and I found the work, when taught by him, both easy and pleasant.

I was placed in the second mate's watch, and had to keep my watch regularly. In this I was fortunate. William Bell was his name. He was a quiet, gentlemanly young man, who always kept his temper, however roughly spoken to by the captain. It was through no want of spirit that he did not reply to the abuse thrown at him as I afterwards discovered, but because it was the wisest and most dignified course to pursue. As I said before, I expected to mess in the cabin, and to be a sort of mid-shipman; but when I went up to the captain and told him so, he laughed at me, and asked me if I would show him any written agreement on the subject, for that he knew nothing at all about it. All he could say was, that I was entered as a ship's boy; that as such I must be berthed and messed, and do duty. If I did not like it, he would see what Mr. Stovin had to say to me. I saw that there



was no help for me ; so following Silas Flint's advice, I determined to grin and bear it.

Mr. Bell, during our night watches, took great pains to explain to me many parts of navigation ; but it was not till I had been some time at sea that I comprehended them clearly. Mr. Bell never spoke to me in the day-time ; for if the captain saw him, he was certain to send me to perform some kind of drudgery or other. I was set to do all the dirty work in the ship, to black down the rigging, to grease the masts, etc., etc. ; indeed, my hands were always in the tar-bucket ; but it served the useful purpose of teaching me a seaman's duty, and of accustoming me to work. The captain and first mate's abusive language, however, I could not stand ; and my feelings resented it even more than the blows they were continually dealing me.

I have said little about the emigrants. If my lot was bad, theirs was much worse. They were looked upon by the officers as so many sheep or pigs, and treated with no more consideration. Crowded together below, allowed to accumulate filth and dirt of every description, their diet, bad and scanty, and never encouraged to take the air on deck, disease soon broke out and spread among them. Old and young, married and single of both sexes, were mingled indiscriminately together ; and the scenes I witnessed when I was obliged to go below turned me sick with disgust, as they made my heart bleed with sorrow. The surgeon had little more knowledge of his profession than I had, and had not the slightest notion of what ought to be done to stop the ravages of disease. However, I do not wish to dwell on these scenes.

## CHAPTER VI

FOR ten days we had fine weather and light winds ; but a southerly gale sprang up, and drove us to the northward, and I then found out what it was to be at sea. Of course I had to do duty, as before, aloft ; and following Derrick's advice was of service, or one night, while furling top-sails, and when the ship was pitching tremendously, I should certainly have been



killed. On a sudden I found myself jerked right off the yard; but I fortunately had hold of the gasket, which I was passing through the mizzen top-sail, and by it hauled myself up again and finished the work. After the gale had lasted a week, the wind came round from the northward, and bitter cold it was. We then stood on rather farther to the north than the usual track, I believe.

It was night, and blowing fresh. The sky was overcast, and there was no moon, so that darkness was on the face of the deep—not total darkness; it must be understood, for that is seldom known at sea. I was in the middle watch, from midnight to four o'clock, and had been on deck about half an hour, when the look-out forward sang out, "Ship ahead—starboard—hard a starboard!"

These words made the second mate, who had the watch, jump into the weather rigging. "A ship!" he exclaimed. "An iceberg it is rather, and—All hands wear ship," he shouted, in a tone which showed there was not a moment to lose.

In consequence of the extreme darkness, it was dangerous to sail either way, for it was impossible to say what other floes or smaller cakes of ice might be in the neighbourhood, and we might probably be on them before they could be seen. We therefore remained hove to. As it was, I could not see the floe till it was pointed out to me by Derrick.

When daylight broke the next morning, the dangerous position in which the ship was placed was seen. On every side of us appeared large floes of ice, with several icebergs floating like mountains on a plain among them; while the only opening through which we could escape was a narrow passage to the north-east, through which we must have come. What made our position the more perilous was, that the vast masses of ice were approaching nearer and nearer to each other, so that we had not a moment to lose if we would effect our escape.

All hands were at the braces ready to trim the sails should the wind head us; for in that case we should have to beat out of the channel, which was every instant growing narrower and narrower. The captain stood at the weather gangway, conning the ship. When he saw the ice closing in on us, he ordered every stitch of canvas the ship could carry to be set on her, in hopes of carrying



her out before this could occur. It was a chance whether or not we should be nipped.

Still narrower grew the passage. Some of the parts we had passed through were already closed. The wind, fortunately, held fair ; and though it contributed to drive the ice faster in on us, it yet favoured our escape. The ship flew through the water at a great rate, heeling over to her ports ; but though at times it seemed as if the masts would go over the sides, still the captain held on. A minute's delay might prove our destruction.

Everyone held his breath as the width of the passage decreased, though we had but a short distance more to make good before we should be free.

I must confess that all the time I did not myself feel any sense of fear. I thought it was a danger more to be apprehended for others than for myself. At length a shout from the deck reached my ears, and looking round I saw that we were on the outside of the floe. We were just in time, for, the instant after, the ice met, and the passage through which we had come was completely closed up. The order was now given to keep the helm up and to square away the yards ; and with a flowing sheet we ran down the edge of the ice for upwards of three miles before we were clear of it. Our captain had had enough of ice, so he steered a course to get as fast as possible into more southern latitudes. This I may consider the first adventure I met with in my nautical career.

## CHAPTER VII

I WAS every day improving my knowledge of seamanship, though my schooling was, it may be supposed, of the roughest kind. The feelings Captain Elihu Swales exhibited towards me did not grow more tender ; but hitherto I had kept my temper, and had flown to obey his orders without answering his abuse. At last, however, one day when the ship was caught in a heavy squall, we were somewhat slow in reefing the mizzen top-sail ; and as we descended on deck he laid a rope's end across the shoulders of several of us. I could not stand this ; for I and another of the topmen, generally the smartest, had hurt our hands, and ought not properly to have gone



aloft at all. "How dare you strike me, Captain Swales?" I exclaimed. "I paid you a sum for my passage, as also to learn seamanship, and not to be treated as a slave."

It was the first time I had replied to him. Perhaps speaking increased the anger I felt, perhaps it was that I saw his eyes quail before mine; but, be that as it may, a handspike lay near, and almost unconsciously I grasped it, and made as if I would strike him in return.

"A mutiny!" he exclaimed, with an oath.

"A mutiny!—knock down the rascally mutineer."

"A mutiny!" repeated Mr. Stovin, the first mate; and suiting the action to the word, he dealt me a blow on the head with his fist, which sent me sprawling on the deck.

Several of the crew, as well as the emigrants, who had seen what had occurred, cried out, "Shame, shame!" but they were afraid of interfering, so that my enemies had it all their own way.

I was forthwith dragged forward by Stovin and two or three of the men who made up to him, and lashed down to the foot of the bowsprit, where I was most exposed to the spray which flew over the ship, and could be watched from every part. "You'll cool your temper and your heels there, my lad, till I let you go," whispered my old enemy in a tone of voice which showed the vindictive triumph he felt.

For the whole of that day I was kept there, watched by one of the mate's creatures, so that no one with friendly feelings could come near me. Some mouldy biscuits and a piece of hard junk were brought to me long after the dinner hour, and when I was almost too sick with hunger to eat. When night drew on, I asked my guard if I was to be released. "Maybe not till the end of the voyage," was the unsatisfactory answer. "They hangs mutineers."

Though I did not for a moment suppose such would be my fate, I yet bitterly repented having, by giving way to my temper, allowed my enemies to get an advantage over me. The wind fell, and there was less sea; but still the night was a very dreary one to me, and, besides other physical discomforts, I was half-starved. There has been seldom, however, a time when some ray of comfort has not shone from above, or some human sympathy



has not been shown for my sufferings. It had just gone two bells in the first watch, when I saw a figure creeping cautiously upon the fore-castle to where I was sitting. "Hush!" he whispered; and I knew by the voice it was Silas Flint. "You've friends who'll help you when the time comes. I've been watching an opportunity to bring you something more fit to eat than the horseflesh and beans I hear you've had. Eat it while you can." Saying this, he put into my hand some potted meat and fine biscuits, which I found very refreshing. I must observe that my hands were only so far at liberty that I could get them to my mouth, but I could not move them to cast off my lashings.

It was just at the end of the middle watch, and, in spite of the wet and my uncomfortable position, I had dropped off to sleep, when I was aroused by loud shrieks and cries, and a rush of people on deck. The awful words, "Fire! fire! fire!" resounded through the ship. Several in the first paroxysm of alarm, leaped overboard; and, no one regarding them, or attempting to rescue them, they were drowned. I was a witness of their fate, but could make no one attend to me. The watch below and the officers were instantly on deck; but for some time nothing was done, and the ship continued her course in darkness over the deep.

"Silence, fore and aft!" shouted the captain, who believed that it was a false alarm. "Those who spread this report deserves to be hove overboard. I'll take care to make inquiries about it—in the morning. What frightens you all so?"

"Fire! fire! fire!" was the answer of others, rushing up from below

For some minutes the shrieks and cries and confusion prevented me from hearing anything more; nor could the exertions of the officers serve to maintain order. At last the captain, who had been incredulous, or pretended to be so, became convinced that there was some cause for the alarm, and on going round the lower deck a strong smell of fire was perceived, and smoke was found to be issuing from the fore-hatchway over the hold. No flames were seen, so it was evident that the fire was among the cargo in the lower hold. The hatchway was accordingly opened, and immediately dense volumes of











smoke arose, and almost stifled me where I remained lashed.

When it was discovered that the fire was forward, the ship was hove to, thus, under the idea that as fire works to windward, to prevent its being driven so rapidly aft as it would otherwise have been. Buckets were now cried for, and the crew and all the emigrants whose fears had not mastered their senses were engaged in filling them with water and in heaving it down below. A pump was also rigged and manned, which, with a hose attached to it, played down the hatchway.

After some time this appeared to have effect, and Mr. Bell, who, quiet as he generally seemed, was now the soul of everything, volunteered to go down in order to discover the exact position of the fire. Securing a rope round his body, while some of the crew on whom he could depend held on, he boldly threw himself into the midst of the smoke. Not a quarter of a minute had passed before he sang out to be hauled up again. When he reappeared he was insensible, and it was some time before he recovered. They brought him up to the fore-castle close to me, and the first words I heard which he uttered were: "She's all on fire below, and I doubt if water will put it out."

This was very dreadful; and I began to consider whether I was fated to be roasted and then drowned, when I saw my friend Silas Flint creeping cautiously up to me. "Hillo, Peter, my lad, you seem to take it coolly enough; but you shan't, if I can help it, be roasted like a lark on a spit; so I've come to give you a chance for your life. I did not come before, not because I had forgotten you, but because I knew that wicked captain of ours was watching me, and would have prevented me from setting you at liberty if he could. However, he's enough else, I guess, to think of just now."

"Thank you, Flint—thank you for your kindness," I answered, as he was cutting the lanyards which confined me. "Do you think there is any danger, though?"

"The ship may burn till she's too hot to hold us," he replied laconically; "and then it is not easy to say where five hundred people are to find standing-room. There is danger, Peter; but a stout heart may face and overcome it."



"What do you propose to do?" I asked.

"Get into a boat if I can, or else build a raft and float on that. I'll not go down as long as I can find something to keep me up."

Flint's calmness gave me courage; and after that, notwithstanding the dreadful scenes I witnessed, I did not feel any fear. As soon as I was at liberty, I set to work with Flint to make myself useful; and though I was close to Captain Swales while we were working the pump, he did not observe me. An event of the sort I am describing shows people in their true colours. While some of the passengers threw off their jackets and set to with a will, several had cast themselves on the deck, weeping and groaning among the women; and Flint and one of the mates had actually to go and kick them up before they would attempt to perform their duty.

It is difficult to describe the horrors of that night, or rather morning, before the day broke—the ship rolling and pitching on before a heavy sea (whither she went no one considered, provided she was kept before the wind)—the suffocating smoke which rose from the depths of the hold—the cries of despair heard on every side—the scenes of cowardly fear and intense selfishness which were exhibited. Still we floated; but I expected every instant to see the ship plunge head foremost down into the depths of the ocean; for I thought the fire must soon burn a hole through her planks. I was not aware how long fire takes to burn downwards. One of the greatest cowards of the crew, and a big bully he was, happened to be at the helm, when the fire was first reported; and as soon as the captain and mates went forward to attend to rigging the pumps, his fears overcame him, and he deserted his post.

Fortunately, one of the crew was aft, and went to the helm and kept it up, or the ship would have broached to, and, before she could have been put on her course, the sea would have swept over our decks, and the destruction of all would have been expedited. At the same time a number of the passengers made a rush at the larboard-quarter boat, and while some got into her, others lowered her down, intending to follow. Going fast, as the ship was, through the water, of course she was immediately swamped, and every soul in her perished. Three or four



of those who were about to follow, so great was their eagerness, before they understood what had occurred, leaped where they expected to find her, and met the fate of the rest.

This was reported to the captain, who at once set a guard over the other boats. Indeed, as yet, there was no necessity for anyone to quit the ship. The boatswain, however, who had charge of the boats, followed by the fellow who had quitted the wheel, the cook and one or two others, soon afterwards collecting some provisions, sails, compasses, tools, and other things they thought necessary, deliberately lowered one, and getting into her, veered her astern, where they remained, careless of what became of the rest of us. Such was the state of things when the sun shone forth on the ocean world.

The decks, covered with women and children, and even many men lying prostrate, looked as if just swept by the shots of an enemy. Such countenances, too, of terror, agony, and despair as were exhibited, it is difficult to describe. Many had fainted, and some had actually died through fear, and lay quiet enough. Others rushed about the decks like madmen, impeding the exertions of the officers and crew, and crying out that the ship should be steered to the nearest land, and insisted on being set on shore immediately. Had the captain been a man of firmness and moral courage, to whom his officers and crew had been accustomed to look up, much of the disorder would have been prevented, and perhaps the lives of all might have been saved; but they knew him to be a bully and a coward, and the first impulse of each was to think of his own individual safety, as they knew he would do of his. Thus not one quarter of the necessary exertions were made to save the ship; indeed, Mr. Bell and his watch were the only part of the crew who really did any good.

## CHAPTER VIII

It is my belief that, if proper measures had been taken the moment the fire was discovered, it might have been extinguished, and if not, its progress might have been retarded. The ship had a large quantity of coal among her cargo, and there is no doubt it originated



in it by spontaneous combustion. Some said it had been smouldering away ever since we left Liverpool. What would have been our sensations had we known that we had a volcano on board? When some of the passengers saw that the object of our exertions was to fill the hold with water, they began to cry out that the quickest way would be to start the water-tanks on deck. The captain, on hearing this, immediately explained that if they did so they would repent it, for without water they could not live, and that this was the only fresh water at which they would shortly be able to get. On learning their mad design, he should instantly have placed some of the crew on whom he could depend, with arms in their hands, to guard the tanks, and with orders to cut down anyone who should attempt to touch the bungs. Instead, he contented himself with pointing out the folly of the proceeding.

His words were not heeded; and without any attempt to prevent them, several of the madmen started the water from the tanks. "Hurrah!" they shouted, as they performed this feat; "the fire will now be put out, and we shall be saved." The hidden fire laughed at their puny efforts, and the wreaths of smoke came forth as dense as ever.

A consultation among the officers was now held; and it was their opinion that we were in as good a position as could be for being fallen in with by ships crossing the Atlantic, and that therefore we should continue as we were—hove to. We all watched with deep anxiety the progressive increase of the smouldering furnace below us. Fortunately, the flames did not begin to burst forth.

Dreadful as the day was, it passed more rapidly than I could have expected. There was nothing to mark the time; there were no regular meals, no bells struck, no watches set. The captain, on seeing the want of effect produced by the water thrown on the cargo, abandoned all hopes of saving the ship, and thought only how he might best secure his own safety. The stern-boat was, as I have said, towing astern. I now saw him go aft, and with the aid of some of the people, to whom he had spoken privately, he lowered down the starboard-quarter boat, having first put into her compasses, provisions, and water. The first mate meantime baled out the other quarter



boat, and in like manner provisioned and stored her. Three hands being placed in each, they were veered astern. The captain and mate knew that these men would not desert them, because, without their assistance, they would be unable to find their way to any port.

I took my spell at the pumps, and on several occasions the captain passed me and gave me a scowl, by which I knew that he recognised me, and probably contemplated leaving me behind in the burning ship; at least so I thought at the time, and resolved to frustrate his kind intentions. The captain next gave orders to the crew to hoist out the long-boat, as the sea had gone down sufficiently to enable this to be done without risk. The long-boat is stowed on the booms amidships, and it requires tackles to the yard-arms, and considerable exertions, to launch her. It was the first time I had ever observed Captain Swales and Mr. Stovin really energetic in their exertions, when they were getting this done; and I very soon found that they had a reason for it, as they intended to take possession of her for themselves and those they most favoured. She at length was launched and dropped astern; and, being hauled up under the cabin windows, the ladies and other cabin passengers were lowered into her. She was likewise provisioned; and compasses, charts, sails, and oars were placed in her.

I thought that the captain, as a precautionary measure, wished to place the passengers in comparative safety; but what was my surprise, to see him lower himself into the boat, and drop her astern, virtually abandoning all command of the ship! This vile example was followed by Mr. Stovin, who took possession of one of the quarter boats. The greater part of the crew, and all the steerage and second-class passengers, still remained in the burning ship, of which Mr. Bell now took the command. When the people saw the captain deserting them, they rushed aft, some with piteous cries, exclaiming, "O captain dear, save us! save us!" Others cursed him as a traitor for leaving them to their fate; and I believe, had they known what he was about to do, they would have torn him in pieces before they would have let him go.\* He

\* I regret to say that the whole account of the burning ship is perfectly true. Incredible as it may seem, the fire continued smouldering for nearly a week before the flames burst forth.



shouted to them in return, that he was not going to desert them, but that his presence was required in the boat. I have always held that the captain should be the last man to quit the deck of his ship; and every true seaman thinks the same, and would scorn to do otherwise.

"A pretty job, this is," observed Dick Derrick, who was working away at the pumps close to me. "We were nearly squeezed to death by the ice a few days ago, and now it seems we are to be roasted with fire. Are you prepared for death, Peter?"

I replied that I would rather live.

"Then the sooner we begin to knock some sort of rafts together, to float a few of these poor people, the better," he observed. "I'll just hint the same to Mr. Bell."

I saw him go up to Mr. Bell, and, touching his hat, speak earnestly to him.

"You are right, Derrick," remarked the second mate as he passed me. "We must keep the passengers working at the pumps, though, to the last, while the crew build the rafts."

As soon as the plan was conceived, all hands set to work to collect spars, and to knock away the fittings of the lower deck, the bulkheads, and the bulwarks. We thus very soon formed three small rafts, each capable of supporting thirty or forty people in calm weather—a very small portion of the poor wretches on board.

Mr. Bell urged the crew to continue their exertions, and not to launch the rafts till the last moment. "We do not know where the rafts may drive to; and as we are now in the usual track of ships bound to America, our signal of distress may be seen, and we may be saved without more risk," he observed, addressing several who seemed about to launch one of the rafts. His words, however, had not much effect; for a few minutes afterwards their fears overpowered their better judgment, and one of the rafts was launched overboard. It was with some difficulty that it could be kept alongside. They fitted it with a mast and sail, and a few casks of provisions, but no water was to be found, except in a small keg.

While some of the people who intended to embark on it were looking for more, a fresh puff of smoke forced its way up near the mainmast; and this so frightened



the emigrants, that a general rush was made to get on the raft. About thirty were already on it, and so alarmed were they lest the number crowding on it might capsize it, that, ill-provisioned as they were, they cut it adrift. What became of them I know not; for, the night coming on, they were soon lost sight of, and we never saw them again. That night was far more dreadful than the first; for, though the terror of the people was not so loud, their despair was more pitiable. The remainder of the crew still worked, spell and spell, at the pumps, but the fire gained upon us. At length some of the steerage passengers broke into the cabins, which they rifled of everything on which they could lay their hands, and unfortunately discovered several cases of brandy and wine.

In the cabins they found several muskets, and, taking it into their heads that the crew had been the cause of the disaster, they set upon Mr. Bell and those of us who remained, and, had we not struggled desperately, would have thrown us overboard. They could, fortunately, find no powder and shot, or they would certainly have killed some of the people in the boats. We retreated before them forward; and then, aided by Flint, and some of the more reputable English who had kept sober, we made a rush at them and wrenched their arms from their grasp. So infuriated had they become, what while some of us worked at the pumps and rafts, the rest had to stand guard and keep them at bay. Fortunately the wind fell, and the sea went down with the sun, or it would have been still worse for us.

In one respect the calm was bad, as no ship was likely to come to our rescue. One might have passed within a very short distance of us, and would not have discovered us, as we had no guns on board, nor any blue-lights or rockets, to make signals. We had four old rusty muskets, it is true, but there was scarcely powder enough found to fire them a dozen times. For the best part of the night we were employed in defending our lives from the attacks of the drunken emigrants. After being defeated, they would return to the cabin to search for more liquor; and, not finding any, they would again make a rush upon us, declaring that we knew where it was hid, and that they would have it. I must do the crew justice to say that, with few exceptions, they all



kept sober—and those under Mr. Bell behaved very well. The second mate's conduct was above all praise; for, though repeatedly invited by those in the larboard-quarter boat to come off and to take command of her, he refused to quit the ship.

At length, when the maddening effects of the spirits had worn off, the emigrants sank down exhausted on the deck; and, had the fire then reached where they lay, they would have been burnt, unconscious of their fate. We were now left to consider what was next to be done. Gradually the fire continued creeping aft, as we could feel by the increasing heat of the lower deck; and I can scarcely describe the feelings I experienced as, putting my hand down on the planks, I found them growing hotter and hotter. The hatches over the holds were, however, wisely kept closed, to prevent the flames from bursting forth. The ship was already so full of water, that it would have exposed us to the danger of drowning if we had pumped more into her. A second day dawned on the same scene.

We anxiously scanned the horizon in the hopes that a ship might appear to rescue us, but not a sail was in sight to relieve our anxiety. As the people woke up from their slumbers, the general cry was for water; but no water was to be procured. They had uselessly squandered what might have preserved them. "Water! water!" was repeated by parched mouths which were fated never to taste that fluid again. Burning thirst drove some mad, and several leaped overboard in their delirium. Many died where they lay, on the deck; women and several poor children quickly sank for want of water. No sooner had the breath departed from the body, than we were obliged to throw them overboard, as the corpses lay in our way as we hurried about the decks.

## CHAPTER IX

THE unhappy people were more quiet the second day than during the first; for they were worn out with fatigue, terror, and hunger. Our ensign, reversed, was flying, as a signal of distress, but to little purpose; for there was no one who could see it to help us. Two more



rafts were constructed ; and the carpenters set to work to raise the gunwales of the boats, and they also nailed canvas round their sides, so as to be able to cover them completely in.

Those in the boats appeared very uncomfortable ; and certainly they were much worse off than we were, if it had not been for the uncertainty when the fire might break forth from beneath our feet. Every instant I expected that to take place ; and I certainly felt it difficult to say by what means I should make my escape.

Mr. Bell took off, in the dinghy, a fair proportion to the boats. The people in them begged him to remain, telling him that the ship might suddenly go down, and that he would be lost ; but he replied that he would not desert her and the people, and he instantly returned.

The day passed away without a sail appearing in sight ; and darkness, with its attendant horrors, again drew on. Dreadful, indeed, was that night ; but it was very different from the last. There was then excitement and activity. Now there was a calmness—at times almost a total silence ; but it would speedily be broken by the groans of the dying, and the wails of those who mourned for them.

All attempts to stop the progress of the fire were abandoned as useless. The officers and crew who remained faithful to their trust, took such rest, watch and watch, as the state of the case would allow ; but we were wet through, and our bed was the hard deck.

Somewhere towards the morning, as I was still asleep, I felt my shoulder touched, and the voice of Flint whispered in my ear, " Peter, my lad, rouse up, and come with us. The ship won't much longer give us any footing ; and it's as well to leave her when we can."

" What do you mean, Flint ? " I asked, in the same low tone. " You would not have me quit my shipmates ? "

" What I mean is, that some thirty of us—some of the crew and some emigrants—have resolved to trust ourselves to a raft, rather than to these burning planks ; and that if we wait till daylight, so many will be attempting to get on it, that we shall be all lost together. I don't ask you to desert your shipmates, Peter ; but self-preservation, you know, is the first law of nature."

I considered a moment before I spoke. " I am grateful



to you, Flint, for your kindness ; but I cannot desert Mr. Bell," I replied. "I don't blame you, remember, for going ; but I am differently situated. I am in the second mate's watch—under his command, as it were ; and while he sticks to the ship, so must I."

While I was speaking, I saw a party of people cautiously engaged in launching the raft. After no slight exertions, they succeeded in getting into the water, though the noise they made disturbed a number of the emigrants.

"I understand your motive, my lad, and I suppose you are right," replied Flint. "I wish you could come with us ; and I am half inclined to stay by you—that I am."

"I should be very unhappy if you were the sufferer in consequence of so doing," I answered ; "so pray go, if you think the raft affords the greatest safety."

"No, lad, I care little for my own safety ; but I promised these people to go with them, and to act as their captain. I did so, thinking you would be certain to go too."

I again assured him that nothing would induce me to desert Mr. Bell. So, expressing his sorrow, he shook me warmly by the hand, and slid down the side of the ship on to the raft. I assisted in casting it off, before the rest of the emigrants who were awake discovered what they were about, or else they would senselessly, as before, have attempted to get on it, to the almost certain destruction of them all. Flint and his companions hurriedly shoved off, and then hoisted their sail. I watched the raft as long as it could be seen, standing directly before the wind to the northward ; and I remember at the time my heart misgave me, and I feared that I should never again see my kind but eccentric friend. If a sea should get up, I thought, they in all probability would be drowned. I felt very grateful, also, that I had decided to remain. However, I was too weary to think much about any subject, and I was very shortly again fast asleep on the deck.

As suffering and misery will, after a time, come to an end, and it would be well if we could always remember this when we ourselves are in that condition, so did this night of dark horror, and another morning dawned on the burning wreck. Clouds, streaked with bright red



edges, were gathering on the eastern horizon, as I went aloft to look out for a sail, though with little expectation of seeing one. I had just reached the main-topgallant-mast head, and was sweeping my eyes round the horizon, when I saw, just under the brightest part of the glow caused by the rising sun, a dark spot, which I thought must be the topsail of some square-rigged craft. I looked again; I felt that I could not be mistaken. I shouted out the joyful intelligence—"Sail ho!—ho!—over the larboard quarter."

Instantly the second mate, followed by several others who had strength remaining, ran aloft to ascertain the fact. They also all clearly saw the ship. The people in the boats understood what we were pointing at, and a feeble shout, indicative of their joy, rose from all hands. The question now was, which way she was steering. If to the westward, we had a good chance of being seen by her; but if not, she might pass us by unheeded. This uncertainty was, perhaps, still more painful to endure than our previous hopelessness.

While we were watching the stranger, the clouds gathered thicker in the sky, and the sea began perceptibly to get up, though as yet there was no increase of wind. "I don't altogether like the look of things," observed Derrick to me. "The sea getting up before the wind comes is a pretty sure sign of a heavy gale; and if it does come on to blow, Lord help us, my boy!"

Even as we were talking, we heard the wind whistle in the rigging, and the ship began to surge heavily through the rising waves.

The people in the boats at this were evidently alarmed, and one of the gigs hauled alongside, several persons in her preferring to trust themselves to the burning ship rather than to her. I must remark that a feeling almost of security had come over many of us, and that for my part I could not help fancying that it was nothing unusual to live on board a ship full of fire. Of course I knew that some time or other the flames must burst forth; but I looked upon this event as likely to happen only in some remote period, with which I had little to do. Our sufferings were greatest from want of water, and on that account we were most anxious for the coming of the stranger. Mr. Bell, Derrick, and I were again aloft looking out for



the ship. The captain hauled up under the stern, and hailed to know which way we made her out to be still standing. "Right down for us, sir," answered the mate. "She's a barque, and seems to be coming up with a strong breeze."

It is difficult to describe how anxiously we watched for her. On she came for perhaps half-an-hour, though to us it seemed much longer, when suddenly we saw her, to our dismay, haul her wind and stand away to the north-east. I felt almost as if I should fall from aloft, as our hopes of being rescued were this cruelly blasted. Few of the emigrants understood the change, but the seamen did, and gave way to their feelings in abuse of the stranger, who could not probably have seen our signal of distress. With heavy hearts we descended to the smoking deck.

The wretched emigrants, on discovering the state of the case, gave fresh vent to their despair; some, who had hitherto held up more manfully than the rest, lay down without hope, and others actually yielded up their spirits to the hands of death. Meantime the sea increased, clouds covered the sky, and it came on to blow harder and harder. I had returned aloft, when to my delight, I saw the stranger again bear away and stand for us. I shouted out the joyful information, and once more the drooping spirits of my companions in misfortune were aroused. The sound of a gun was heard booming along the waters. It was a sign from her that she saw our signal of distress. Now she crowded all the sail she could venture to carry in the increasing breeze. Her captain was evidently a humane man, anxious to relieve his fellow-creatures, though he could scarcely have guessed at our frightful condition. There was no mistake now, and on she came, and proved to be a large barque, as Mr. Bell had supposed.

"We have a good chance of escaping a roasting this time," I observed to Derrick, as we watched the stranger.

"But not quite of drowning, lad," he answered. "Before one quarter of the people about us can be placed on her deck, the gale will be upon us, and then, as I said before, how are we the better for her being near us? Howsomdever, we'll do our best, lad; and if the old ship goes down, mind you look out for a plank to stick to, and don't let anyone grip hold of your legs."



I promised to do my best ; but I confess I did not like the prospect he held out.

The barque approached and hove to. A shout of joy escaped from the lips of most of those on board who had still strength to utter it. On this, immediately Captain Swales cast off his boat, his example being followed by the others ; and without attempting to take any of the people out of the ship, he pulled on board the stranger. There was little time to lose ; for scarcely had they got alongside than down came the gale upon us.

In the condition our ship was, the only course was to run before the wind ; so we once again kept away. The stranger soon followed ; and as she carried more sail than we could, we saw she would soon pass us. Hope once more deserted us ; for it was possible that the master, finding that there were so many of us on board, might think himself justified, for the safety of his own people, to leave us to our fate. I confess that on this I regretted that I had not gone off with Silas Flint on the raft ; but then I remembered that I had done my duty in sticking to my ship to the last. It seemed dreadful, indeed, to be thus left to perish. However, just as the stranger was about to pass us, a man in the rigging held up a board, on which was written the cheering words, " We will keep near you, and take you off when the weather moderates."

" Suppose," I thought, " the weather does not moderate till the flames burst forth : at any moment they may break through the deck ! "

I am afraid of wearying my readers with an account of our sufferings.

Our greatest want was water. We fancied that, if we could have had a few drops to cool our lips, we could have borne anything else. Some drank salt water, against the warning of the mate, and in consequence increased their sufferings.

Worn out with fatigue, the crew every hour grew weaker, so that there was scarcely a man left with strength to steer, much more to go aloft. Night came on to increase our difficulties. The stranger proved to be the *Mary*, bound from Bristol also to Quebec. She at first kept a short distance ahead, showing a light over her stern, by which we might steer.



I ought to have said that the captain had taken the sextant, chronometer, and charts with him, and that in their mad outbreak the emigrants had destroyed the binnacle and the compasses in it, so that we had the *Mary's* light alone to depend on. Mr. Bell had divided those who remained of the crew, and some of the emigrants willing to exert themselves, into two watches.

I was to keep the middle watch. I lay down on the deck aft to sleep on one of the only few dry or clean spots I could find. I was roused up at midnight, and just as I had got to my feet, I heard a voice sing out, "Where's the *Mary's* light?" I ran forward. It was nowhere to be seen.

## CHAPTER X

FORTUNATELY a star had appeared in a break of the clouds, and by that we continued steering the same course as before. Once more we were alone on the world of waters, and in a worse condition than ever; for we had now no boats, and the sea was too high to permit us to hope for safety on a raft. Weary and sad were the hours till dawn returned. Often did I wish that I had followed my father's counsels, and could have remained at home. With aching eyes, as the pale light of the dull grey morning appeared, we looked out ahead for the *Mary*. Not a sail was to be seen from the deck. The lead-coloured ocean, heaving with foam-topped waves, was around us bounded by the horizon. On flew our burning ship before the gale, and we would have set more sail to try and overtake the *Mary*, but we had not strength for it. We steered as near as we could the same course as before.

The ship plunged heavily; and as she tore her way through the waves, she rolled her yardarms almost into the water, so that it was difficult to keep the deck without holding on. Nearly at every roll the sea came washing over the deck, and sweeping everything away into the scuppers. One might have supposed that the water would have put out the fire, but it had no effect on it; and it was evident that the coals in the hold were ignited, and that they would go on burning till the ship was under the waves. I had sunk into a sort of stupor, when



I heard Mr. Bell from aloft hail the deck. I looked up and tried to comprehend what he was saying. It was the joyful intelligence that the *Mary* was ahead, lying to for us ; but I was too much worn out to care much about the matter. We again came up with her ; but though the wind had somewhat fallen, the sea was too high to allow a boat to carry us off the wreck.

We acquitted the kind master of the *Mary* of any intentions of deserting us. The officer of the watch had fancied that he saw us following, and had not, consequently, shortened sail. Oh, that day of horrors, and the still more dreadful night which followed ! The fire was gaining on us ; every part of the deck was hot, and thick, choking smoke issued from numberless crevices. With dismay, too, we saw the boats on which our safety so much depended dragged to pieces, as they towed astern of the *Mary*, as they could not be hoisted on board, and their wrecks were cut adrift. Even the crew, who, more inured to hardships, kept up their spirits the best, could but arouse themselves to take a short trick at the helm. What would we have given, I repeat, for a drop of water ! A thousand guineas would willingly have been exchanged for it. The value of riches, and all else for which men toil and toil on while health and strength remain, were becoming as nothing in our sight. One thing alone called any of us to exertion. It was when some wretch, happier, perhaps, than we were, breathed his last, and the shrieks and wails of his relations or friends summoned us to commit his body to the ocean-grave, yawning to receive us all, the living as well as the dead. I must pass over that night. It was far more full of horrors than the last, except that the *Mary*, our only ark of safety, was still in sight.

Another dawn came. The gale began to lull. I was near Derrick. I asked him if he thought we had a chance of escape. He lifted his weary head above the bulwarks. " I scarce know, lad," he replied. " The wind may be falling, or it may be gathering strength for a harder blow. It matters little, I guess, to most of us." And he again sank down wearily on the deck. How anxiously we listened to the wind in the rigging ! Again it breezed up. A loud clap was heard. I thought one of the masts had gone by the board ; but it was the fore-topsail blown



to ribbons. What next might follow we could not tell. The very masts began to shake ; and it was evident that the fire had begun to burn their heels. Their working loosened the deck, and allowed more vent for the escape of smoke. There was again a lull. The foam no longer flew from the white-crested waves ; gradually they subsided in height. The motion of the ship was less violent, though she still rolled heavily, as if unable to steady herself.

We at length began to hope that the final effort of the gale was made. The day wore on—more persons died—the smoke grew thicker, and was seen streaming forth from the cabin windows. Towards evening there was a decided change for the better in the weather, and we saw the people in the *Mary* making preparations to lower a boat, and to heave the ship to. Another difficulty arose : to enable the boat to come alongside, we must likewise stop the way of our ship, but we had not strength to heave her to.

We were too far gone to even feel satisfaction as we saw a boat pulling from the *Mary* towards us. We put down the helm as she came near us, and the ship rounded to. The fresh crew scrambled on board, and, backing our main-topsail, our ship remained steady, a short distance to leeward of the *Mary*. A few of the emigrants were lowered into the boat ; some of the crew remained to take care of us, and the remainder returned on board in safety. This experiment having been successful, another boat was lowered, and more of our people taken off. They brought us also a keg of water ; and so eager were we for it, that we could scarcely refrain from snatching it from each other, and spilling the contents. It occupied a long time to transfer the emigrants from one ship to the other. They were so utterly unable to help themselves, that they had to be lowered like bales of goods into the boats, and even the seamen were scarcely more active.

It was thus dark before all the emigrants were rescued ; and, what was worse, the wind again got up, as did the sea, and prevented any communication between the ships. In one respect during that night the condition of those who remained was improved ; for we had water to quench our burning thirst, and food to quell our hunger ; besides











which, a boat's crew of seamen belonging to the *Mary* gallantly remained by us and navigated the ship, so that we were able to take a sounder rest than we had enjoyed for many days past. Still the flames did not burst forth, and another night and day we continued in that floating furnace. Towards the evening the wind suddenly dropped; and, while the remaining emigrants were being taken off the wreck, it fell a dead calm.

The last man to leave the deck of the *Black Swan* was Mr. Bell. He made me and Derrick go down the ship's side just before him. I trust that we felt grateful to heaven for our deliverance. Scarcely had we left the deck of the *Black Swan* than the flames burst forth from her hold. They first appeared streaming out of the cabin windows, curling upwards round the taffrail. By this time it was quite dark; and the bright light from the burning wreck cast a ruddy glow on the sails and hull of the *Mary*, and topped the far surrounding waves with a bright tinge of the same hue. Soon the whole poop was on fire, and the triumphant flames began to climb up the mizzen-mast. As the ship lay head to wind, their progress was slow forward, nor did they ascend very rapidly; consequently the mizzen-mast fell before the main-mast was on fire. That shortly, however, followed with a loud crash before they even reached the main-topgallant-yard. Next down came the foremast, and the whole hull was a mass of flame. I felt sick at heart as I saw the noble ship thus for ever lost to the use of man. The fire was still raging when, overcome with fatigue and sickness, I sank on the deck. As the *Mary* sailed away from her, she was seen like a beacon blazing fiercely in mid-ocean. Long those on deck gazed till the speck of bright light was on a sudden lost to view, and the glow in the sky overhead disappeared. It was when her charred fragments sank beneath the wave.

## CHAPTER XI

WE were kindly welcomed and cared for on board the *Mary*, though we subjected her passengers and crew to much inconvenience, and to no little risk of starving, should her voyage be prolonged.



There were ladies who attended with gentle care to the women and children, and aided also in nursing the men. Many of the passengers and crew gave up their berths to the sick ; but the greater number of our people were compelled to remain on deck, sheltered, however, by every means the kindness of our hosts could devise. There was one fair, blue-eyed girl—can I ever forget her ? What a pure light-hearted young creature she was ! I felt at once that I could place the same confidence in her that I could in my own sisters, and that she was a being superior both to me and to any of those by whom I had been lately surrounded. Her name was Mary Dean. She was the daughter of the master of the *Mary* and the ship was named after her. Mr. Bell told the master of my behaviour, which he was pleased to praise, and of my refusing to quit the ship till he did ; and Mary heard the tale. The mate also told him that I was the son of a gentleman, and how I had been treated by Captain Swales.

Captain Dean was a very different character to Captain Swales, with whose conduct he was so thoroughly disgusted, that he refused to hold any further communication with him than business actually required. I had held out till I was in safety, and a severe attack of illness then came on. Captain Dean had me removed to a berth in his own cabin, and Mary became my nurse. Where there is sickness and misery, there will the ministering hand of gentle woman be found. Mary Dean watched over me as the ship which bore us steered her course for the mouth of the St. Lawrence. To her gentle care, under Providence, I owed my life. Several of the emigrants died after they came on board the *Mary*, and such would probably have been my fate under less watchful treatment.

I was in a low fever and unconscious. How long I remained so, I scarcely know. I awoke one afternoon, and found Mary Dean sitting by my side working with her needle. I fancied that I was dead, and that she was an angel watching over me. Although I discovered that the first part of the notion was an hallucination, I was every day more convinced of the truth of the second. When I got rather better, she used to read to me interesting and instructive works ; and every morning she read some



portion of the Bible, and explained it to me in a manner which made me comprehend it better than I had ever done before.

Ten days thus passed rapidly away before I was able to go on deck. Captain Dean was very kind to me, and often came and spoke to me, and gave me much useful instruction in seamanship, and also in navigation. I then thought Mary Dean very beautiful, and I now know that she was so. She was a child, it must be remembered, or little more than one; but though very small, she was very graceful. She was beautifully fair, with blue, truthful eyes, in which it was impossible guile could ever find a dwelling-place. I have no doubt that my readers will picture her to themselves as she sat in the cabin with a book in her lap, gravely conning its contents, or skipped along the deck, a being of light and life, the fair spirit of the summer sea. Such was Mary Dean as I first saw her. Everyone loved her. Her father's heart was wrapped up in her. His crew would, to a man, have died rather than that harm should have happened to her. On sailed the ship. There was much sickness, for all hands were put on the smallest allowance of water and provisions it was possible to subsist on; and we, unfortunately, fell in with no other ship able to furnish us with a supply.

At length the welcome sound was heard of "Land ahead!" It was Cape Breton, at the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

It was a happy moment when we at length dropped our anchor at Quebec, and water was brought off to quench the thirst from which all had more or less suffered. As soon as the necessary forms were gone through, the emigrants went on shore, and, with few exceptions, I saw them no more.

I was the only person on board who regretted that the voyage was over. I wished to see the country, and the Indians, and the vast lakes and boundless prairies; but far rather would I have remained with Mary and her father—at least I thought so as the time for quitting them, probably for ever, arrived. I regretted much leaving Captain Dean, for he had been very kind to me; indeed, he had treated me almost like a son, and I felt grateful to him. It was evening. The ship was to haul



in the next morning alongside the quay to discharge her cargo. The captain was on shore, and all the emigrants. Except the anchor-watch on deck, the crew were below. Mary and I were the only persons on the quarter-deck.

"Mary," I said, as I took her hand—the words almost choked me while I spoke—"to-morrow I must leave you to look out for a berth on board some homeward-bound ship. You have been very, very kind to me, Mary, and I am grateful, I am indeed, to you and to your father."

"But I do not see why you should leave us, Peter," answered Mary, looking gravely up, with a somewhat surprised air. "Has not my father told you that he thinks of asking you to remain with him? And then, some day, when you know more of seamanship, you will become his mate. Think of that, Peter, how pleasant it will be! So you must not think of leaving us."

"I have no wish to go, I can assure you, except that I am expected at home," I replied. "But if I stay, what office are you to hold on board, Mary?" I could not help asking.

"Oh, I suppose that I shall be another of the mates," she replied, laughing. "Do you know, Peter, that if I have you to study with, I think that I shall make a very good sailor in a short time. I can put the ship about now in a very good style, let me tell you."

"That's more than I can do, I am afraid," I observed. "But then I can go aloft, and hand and reef; so there I beat you."

"I should not be a bit afraid of going aloft, if I were dressed like you, and papa would let me," she answered naively. "I often envy the men as I see them lying out on the yards or at the mast-head when the ship is rolling and pitching; and I fancy that next to the sensations of a bird on the wing, theirs must be the most enjoyable."

"You are a true sailor's daughter, Mary," I answered, with more enthusiasm than I had ever before felt. "But I don't think your father would quite like to see you aloft; and, let me tell you, when there's much sea on, and it's blowing hard, it's much more difficult to keep there than it looks."

Thus we talked on, and touched on other topics; but they chiefly had reference to ourselves. Nearly the



last words Mary uttered were, "Then you will sail with father, if he asks you, Peter?"

I promised, and afterwards added, "For the sake of sailing with him, Mary, my dear young sister, if you are on board, I would give up kindred, home and country. I would sail with you round and round the world, and never wish again to see the shore, except you were there." She was satisfied at having gained her point. We were very young, and little knew the dangerous sea on which we were proposing to sail. I called her sister, for I felt as if she were indeed my sister.

## CHAPTER XII

THE next morning the *Mary* commenced discharging her cargo. Captain Dean then told me that he hoped I would sail with him, but that, as the ship required a thorough repair, it would be some weeks before she could be at sea again, and that in the meantime he would advise me to employ myself usefully; and he recommended me to take a trip in a trader to Halifax or St. John's, for the sake of gaining information regarding the navigation of those seas.

"A person who wishes to be a thorough sailor (and if a man is not a thorough sailor he had no business to be an officer)," he observed, "will seek every opportunity of making himself well acquainted with the navigation of every sea he visits, the appearance of the coasts, the set of the currents, the rise and fall of the tides, the prevailing winds, and the weather to be expected at different seasons. He will go afloat in every sort of craft, and be constantly considering how he would act under all possible circumstances. He should never weary of making enquiries of other seamen how they have acted, and the result of what they have done. As navigation was not brought to the perfection it has now attained under many centuries, so no man will become a perfect seaman unless he diligently gathers together the information possessed by all whom he meets, at the same time weighing well their opinions, and adopting them after duly comparing them with others.

I have always remembered Captain Dean's advice,



and I advise all young sailors to follow it; indeed, it strikes me that it is applicable to most relations in life.

I looked about for a vessel, but could not find one. Meantime, by the Captain's kindness, I remained on board, though he and Mary went to live in lodgings on shore, as, of course, in the state the ship was in, she could have no comfort even in her own cabin. About three or four days after our arrival, I saw a ship ascend the river and come to an anchor not far from where we were lying. Prompted by curiosity, I was looking at her through a telescope, when I observed a group of people on the deck who were gazing apparently with the curiosity of strangers at the shore. A little apart from them stood a form I thought I recognised. I pointed my glass steadily at him. I felt certain that I could not be mistaken. It was Silas Flint. Then all on the raft, instead of perishing, as it was supposed they would, might have been saved, as he had escaped. I was truly glad, and, borrowing the dinghy from the mate, I pulled on board the newly-arrived ship.

Silas—for I was right in my conjectures—was looking over the side as I climbed up it. He almost wrung my hand off as he took it in his grasp. "I am glad to see ye, I am, Peter!" he exclaimed. "Why, lad, I thought you had gone to the bottom with all who remained on board."

I told him that we had in like manner fancied that all on the raft had perished; and I was glad to find that, with the exception of two, all had been picked up by the ship on board of which they then were. He then asked me what my plans were, and I told him what Captain Dean advised. He next inquired if I had seen Captain Swales. I replied that I had met him twice in the streets of Quebec, and that he had eyed me with no very friendly glance.

"Then depend on it, Peter, he means you some mischief," he observed. "If he gets another ship here, which is likely enough he will, he will want hands; and if he can lay hold of you, he will claim you as put under his charge by your father; and I don't know how you are to get off."

"By keeping out of his way, I should think," I replied.

"That's just what I was going to advise you to do, Peter," observed Silas. "And I'll tell you what, lad,



instead of you kicking your heels doing nothing in this place, you and I will start off up the country with our guns as soon as I have done my business here, which won't take long, and we'll see if we can't pick up a few skins which will be worth something."

This proposition, as may be supposed, was much to my taste ; but I did not much like the thoughts of leaving Captain Dean and Mary, though I did not tell him so. He, however, very soon discovered what was running in my mind, and set himself to work to overcome the wish I had to remain with them. I had found so few friends of late, that I had learned to value them properly. But Silas Flint wanted a companion, and, liking me, was resolved that I should accompany him. We went on shore together ; and before the day was over, he had so worked up my imagination by his descriptions of the sport and scenery of the backwoods, that I became most eager to set off.

I next day told Captain Dean ; and as I assured him that it was my father's wish that I should see something of the country, he did not oppose the plan, provided I should return in time to sail with him. This I promised to do ; and I then went below to tell Mary, who was in the cabin packing up some things to take on shore. To my surprise, she burst into tears when I gave her the information ; and this very nearly made me abandon my project. When, however, I told her of my promise to return, she was comforted ; and I added that I would bring her back plenty of skins to make her tippets and muffs for the winter, to last her for years.

Three days after his arrival at Quebec, Flint was ready to set out. I had preserved intact the money my kind father had given me, and with it I purchased, at Flint's suggestion, a rifle, and powder, and a shot-belt, a tinder-box, a pipe, some tobacco, a tin cup, and a few other small articles. " Now you've laid in your stock-in-trade, my lad," he observed, as he announced my outfit to be complete. " With a quick eye and a steady hand you've the means, by my help, of making your fortune ; so the sooner we camp out and begin the better."

I told him I was ready, and asked him where we were to go.

" Oh, never you mind that, lad," he replied. " It's



a long way from here; but a man with his eyes open can always find his way there and back. All you've to do is to follow the setting sun going, and to look out for him rising when coming back."

"Then I suppose you mean to go to the westward?" I observed.

"Ay, lad, to the far west," he answered; but I confess that at the time I had no idea how far off that "far west" was.

We set off the next morning by a steamer to Montreal, and on from there, past Kingston, to Toronto on Lake Ontario, in Upper Canada. Flint lent me money to pay my way. He said that I should soon be able to reimburse him. I need not say how delighted I was with the fine scenery and the superb inland seas on which I floated. I could scarcely persuade myself that I was not on the ocean, till I tasted the water alongside. As my intention is to describe my adventures afloat, rather than those on shore, I shall be very brief with my account of the life we led in the backwoods.

From Toronto we crossed the country to Goodrich, a town on the shores of Lake Huron. Here we took a passage in a sailing vessel, trading to the factories on the northern shore of the lake, and at the nearest we landed and prepared for our expedition. Flint observed that, as we were short of funds, we must proceed on an economical principle. He therefore purchased only a small though strong pony, to carry our provisions and the skins of the animals we might kill, while we were to proceed humbly on foot.

We were now in a land teeming with every description of game; and I was able to prove to Flint that I was not a worse shot than I had sometimes boasted to him of being. The weather was generally fine, so that a bark hut afforded us ample shelter at night, and our rifles gave us as much food as we could require. Our greatest enemies were mosquitoes and other flies, and it was only by smearing our faces over with fat that we could free ourselves from their attacks.

We constantly encountered the Indian inhabitants of that territory; but they were invariably friendly, and willing to trade with us. Silas understood their language a little, so that with the aid of signs we could



carry on sufficient conversation for our purpose. Six weeks thus passed rapidly away, and I calculated that it would be time for me to return to Quebec; so I told Silas I must wish him good-bye. He seemed very much vexed at this; for I believe that he both liked my society and found me very useful to him. He had, indeed, formed the intention of keeping me by him, and converting me into a regular trapper and hunter; but, fond as I was of sport, for this I had no fancy, and I therefore persisted in my purpose of returning. Seeing that he could not prevail on me to remain, he accompanied me back to the fort, where he made over to me my fair share of the skins.

After the delay of a week, I found a vessel returning to the lower lakes, and in her I set sail for Quebec.

### CHAPTER XIII

At length I reached Quebec, and hurried to the quay where I had left the *Mary*. She was not there. I hastened to the dockyard where she was to be repaired; I made inquiries for her of everybody I met. "What, the *Mary*, Captain Dean?" replied a shipwright to whom I spoke; "why, she sailed three weeks ago and better, for the West Indies, or some of them ports to the southward; she's pretty well there by this time."

I felt that he was speaking the truth, and my heart sank within me; but to make sure, I ran on to the house at which Captain Dean and Mary had lodged. The woman, who was a French Canadian, received me very kindly, and seemed to enter into my feelings when she corroborated the account I had heard. She did not know exactly where the ship had gone; but she said that my friends were very sorry when I did not come back at the time appointed. At last Monsieur the captain grew angry, and said he was afraid I was an idle fellow, and preferred the vagabond life of a hunter to the harder though nobler work of a seaman; but "*ma pauvre petite*," as she called Mary, took my part, and said she was certain some accident had happened to me, or I should have been back when I promised. "Sweet Mary, I knew that she would defend me," I muttered; "and yet how little do I deserve her confidence!"



"Ah, she is indeed a sweet child," observed Madam Durand, divining my thoughts; "she cried very much indeed when the ship had to sail away without you, and nothing would comfort the poor dear."

This information, though very flattering to me, added to my regret. I was now obliged to consider what I should next do. On making further inquiries of the ship-broker, I discovered that there was a possibility of Captain Dean's going to New Orleans, and I at once formed the idea of finding my way, by land and river, to that city. I knew little more of the geography of the country than I did on my arrival, but the immense distance in no way daunted me. I wanted to visit the States, and I was certain that my gun would always afford me the means of proceeding by any public conveyance, when I required it. I had a good sum remaining from the sale of the peltries I had saved; and with this in my pockets I once more started for the lakes of Upper Canada, purposing from thence to work my way through the western states down the Mississippi to New Orleans.

An American vessel, which I found at Goodrich, conveyed me, through Lake Huron, to a fort at the southern extremity of Lake Michigan, called, if I recollect rightly, Fort Dearborn. The voyage was long and tiresome. The feeling that one is in a fresh-water lake, and at the same time being out of sight of land for days together, is very curious. It gives one a more perfect notion than anything else can of the vastness of the country in which such inland seas exist.

Till I got into the settled districts, I shot and trapped as before. My rifle always supplied me with abundance of food; and, whenever I reached a trading-post, I was able to exchange my peltries for a fresh store of powder and shot. When passing through the more inhabited districts, I was invariably hospitably received by the settlers, whatever was the nation to which they before belonged. Travelling through a large portion of the state of Indiana, I entered that of Illinois, and at length I embarked with a party of hunters in a canoe on the river of the same name, which runs through its centre. With these people I proceeded to St. Louis, a city situated on the spot where the mighty streams of the Mississippi and Missouri join their waters.



St. Louis was founded by the French, and is still very French in its general aspect. I here easily disposed of my remaining skins for a good sum of money, which I secured in a band round my waist. I remained here only two days, for I was anxious to proceed to the south ; and, finding a steamer starting down the Mississippi, I went on board, and for about eight dollars engaged a passage on deck to New Orleans. The passage occupied ten days.

As soon as I landed I set to work to try and discover the *Mary*, if she was there, or to gain tidings of her should she have sailed, as, from the length of time I had occupied in my journey, I was afraid might be the case. I walked along the quays, examining every ship in the river, and, after a long search, I was convinced that the *Mary* was not there. I next had recourse to the ship-brokers and ship-chandlers, but from none of them could I gain any information. I then began to make inquiries of the people I found lounging about the quays smoking and otherwise killing the time. At last I saw a man who stood lounging against a post, with a cigar in his mouth and his arms folded, and who, by the glance he cast at me, seemed to court inquiry.

He was, I remember well, a sallow-faced, gaunt fellow, with large expressive eyes, and black hair, which hung down from under his Panama hat in ringlets, while a pair of gold rings adorned his ears. He had on a nankeen jacket and large white trousers, with a rich silk sash round his waist, in which was ostentatiously stuck a dagger, or rather a Spanish knife, with a handsome silver hilt. I took him for a Spaniard by his appearance ; but when I accosted him in English, he replied in the same language, with scarcely a foreign accent. "And so you are looking for the *Mary*, Captain Dean, are you ? Very curious," he observed : "I left her three weeks ago at the Havanah waiting for a cargo ; and she won't be off again for another three weeks or more."

"Then I may reach her in time !" I ejaculated.

"Do you belong to her ?" he continued. "You have not much the look of a seaman."

He was right, for I was still dressed in my mocassins and hunting costume, with my rifle in my hand, and my other worldly property slung about me, so I must have cut rather a curious figure.



I replied that I was to have belonged to her, and explained how it had happened that she had sailed without me. By degrees I told him more of my history; and finally, without my intending it, he drew the whole of it from me.

"You are a likely lad," he observed, with an approving nod. "The fact is, I sail to-morrow for the Havanah, in the schooner you see out yonder; and if you like to ship on board, you may, that's all." He pointed, as he spoke, to a large square-topsail schooner which lay out in the stream, at a single anchor.

She will not take long to get under weigh, I thought, as I looked at her. Eager as I was to reach the Havanah, I jumped at his offer. "I have not been accustomed to a craft like yours," I replied, "but I will do my duty on board her, to the best of my power."

"That's all we require; and perhaps, if you find your friend gone, you will like us well enough to remain with us," he observed with a laugh. "We are constantly on the wing, so you will have no time to get weary of any place where we touch, as is the case in those big ships, which lie in harbour for months together. If you want to become a seaman, go to sea in a small craft say I."

I told him that I did wish to become a seaman; but I did not say that it was for the sake of sailing with Captain Dean, nor did I mention his daughter. Indeed, I had kept her name altogether out of my narrative.

The arrangement being concluded, he advised me to go and get a sea-rig, remarking that my present costume was not exactly suited for going aloft in. There were several outfitting shops, such as are to be found in all seaports, and towards one of them of the most inviting appearance I bent my steps. Before going, however, I inquired of my new friend his name, and that of the schooner.

"The English<sup>h</sup> and Americans call me John Hawk, and my craft the *Foam*," he answered. "Captain John Hawk, remember. The name is not amiss; so you may use it, for want of a better."

"Are you neither an Englishman nor an American?" I asked.

"No, youngster, I belong to no nation," he replied; and I observed a deep frown on his brow as he spoke. "Neither Spain, France, Portugal, England nor even this



free and enlightened country, owns me. Are you afraid of sailing with me, in consequence of my telling you this? If you are, you may be off your bargain."

"No," I answered, "no; I merely asked for curiosity; and I hope you won't consider me impertinent."

"Not if you don't insist on an answer," he replied. "And now go and get your outfit."

As I walked along, I meditated on his odd expressions; but I had no misgivings on the subject. I did not like the first shop I reached, so I went on to another, with the master of which I was more pleased. I there, at a fair price, very soon got the things I wanted, and, going into a back room, rigged myself out in them; while my hunting costume I did up in a bundle, to carry with me, for I was unwilling to part from so old and tried a friend.

As I was paying for the things, the whole of which cost somewhere about fifteen dollars, a stout, good-looking, elderly man came into the shop. I at once recognised him as the master of an American brig on board of which I had been in the Liverpool docks. I felt as if he was an old friend, and could not help speaking to him. He was very good-natured, though he did not remember me, which was not surprising. I asked him if he had met the *Mary*.

"I left her at the Havanah, for which place I sail to-morrow," he answered.

"So does Captain Hawk, of the *Foam*," I observed, "I have just shipped on board her."

"Youngster," he said, looking grave, "you do not know the character of that vessel, I am sure, or you would not willingly set foot on her deck. She is a noted slaver, if not something worse; and as you put confidence in me, I will return the compliment, and would strongly advise you to have nothing to do with her."

"But I have engaged to sail with Captain Hawk, and he seems a fair-spoken man," I urged.

"If you choose to trust to his fair speeches more than to my blunt warnings, I cannot help it," he answered. "I have done my best to open your eyes for you to his true character. If you persist in following your own counsel, you will soon have to open them yourself very wide, when it is too late."

I liked the tone of the master's voice, as well as the expression of his countenance; and I, therefore, felt



inclined to believe him. At the same time I did not like to be moved, as it were, from my purpose by every breath of wind.

"I promised to sail with Captain Hawk, or whatever may be his name; and though I cannot doubt but that you have good reason for what you say, sir, yet I don't like to desert him, without some proof that he is the character you describe him," he replied.

"Did he tell you what trade he was in?" asked the captain.

"No, sir," I replied; "he said nothing about it."

"Then be guided by me, youngster, and don't ship with him," he said, speaking most earnestly. "You may make every enquiry about my brig, the *Susannah*, Captain Samuel Searle. You will find all is clear and above board with me. I want hands, I own, and I should be glad to have you, but that does not influence me in what I say."

The shopkeeper corroborated all Captain Searle had told me, and added so many other stories of the character of Captain Hawk and his schooner, that I felt truly glad there was yet time to escape from him. Bad as he might be there was something in his manner which made me wish not to desert him altogether, without offering him some excuse for my conduct. I accordingly, leaving my bundle in the shop, went back to the quay, where I found him lounging as before. He at first did not know me in my change of dress when I accosted him.

"You are a likely lad for a sailor," he remarked, as he ran his eye over me approvingly.

"I am glad you think so," I answered; and I then told him I had met the master of a vessel whom I had known in Liverpool, and that I wished to sail with him.

"And he has been telling you that I am a slaver, I suppose, or something worse, eh?" he exclaimed in a sneering tone, and with an angry flash of the eye I did not like. I looked conscious, I suppose; for he continued: "And you believed him, and were afraid to sail with so desperate a character, eh? Well, lad, go your own ways, I don't want to lead you. But I know of whom you speak, for I saw him go into the shop where you have been, and tell him to look out for himself, that's all." Saying this, he turned on his heel, and I went back to the shop.



I told Captain Searle what Captain Hawk had said.

"That does not matter," he answered. "He cannot do me more harm than he already seeks to do; so I do not fear him."

I was now pretty well convinced of the honesty of Captain Searle; but to assure myself still further, I called on two or three ship-brokers, who all assured me that his ship was a regular trader, and gave a favourable report of him. When I inquired about Captain Hawk, they screwed up their mouths, or made some other sign expressive of disapprobation, but were evidently unwilling to say anything about him. In the evening I went on board the *Susannah*; and I must say that I was very glad to find myself once more afloat.

#### CHAPTER XIV

THE *Susannah* was a fine brig, of about three hundred tons burden. She had a raised poop, but no topgallant forecastle; so the crew were berthed in the fore-peak, in the very nose, as it were, of the vessel. I had engaged to serve as a boy before the mast. Indeed, perfectly unknown as I was, with slight pretensions to a knowledge of seamanship, I could not hope to obtain any other berth.

The crew were composed of about equal numbers of Americans—that is, subjects of the United States—and of Englishmen, with two blacks and a mulatto, a Spaniard, and a Portuguese. The first officer, Mr. Dobree, was a great dandy, and evidently considered himself much too good for his post; while the second mate, Mr. Jones, was a rough-and-ready seaman, thoroughly up to his work.

I was welcomed by my new shipmates in the fore-peak with many rough but no unkind jokes; and as I had many stories to tell of my adventures in the backwoods, before we turned in for the night I had made myself quite at home with them.

At daybreak on the next morning all hands were roused out to weigh anchor. As we passed close to the spot where, on the previous day, the *Foam* lay at anchor, I looked for her. She was nowhere to be seen. She must have got under weigh and put to sea at night. "She's gone, Peter,



you observe," remarked Captain Searle, as some piece of duty called me near him. "I'm glad you are not on board her; and I hope neither you nor I may ever fall in with her again."

From New Orleans to Belize, at the mouth of the Mississippi, is about one hundred miles; and this distance, with the aid of the current and a favourable breeze, we accomplished by dusk, when we prepared once more to breast old ocean's waves.

Though the sea breeze was very reviving after the hot, pestilential air of New Orleans, yet as it came directly in our teeth, our captain wished it from some other quarter. We were enabled, however, to work off the shore; and as during the night the land-breeze came pretty strong, by daybreak the next morning we were fairly at sea.

Before the sun had got up, the wind had gone down, and it soon became what seamen called a flat calm. The sea, as the hot rays of the sun shone on it, was, as it were, like molten lead; the sails flapped lazily against the mast; the brig's sides, as she every now and then gave an unwilling roll, threw off with a loud splash the bright drops of water which they lapped up from the imperceptibly heaving bosom of the deep. The hot sun struck down on our heads with terrific force, while the pitch bubbled up out of the seams of the deck; and Bill Tasker, the wit of the crew, declared he could hear it squeak into the bargain. An awning was spread over the deck in some way to shelter us, or we should have been roasted alive. Bill, to prove the excess of the heat, fried a slice of salt junk on a piece of tin, and, peppering it well, declared it was delicious. The only person who seemed not only not to suffer from the heat, but to enjoy it, was the black cook; and he, while not employed in his culinary operations, spent the best part of the day basking on the bowsprit-end.

The crew were engaged in their usual occupations of knotting yarns, making sinnet, etc., while the aforesaid Bill Tasker was instructing me—for whom he had taken an especial fancy—in the mysteries of knotting and splicing; but we all of us, in spite of ourselves, went about our work in a listless, careless way, nor had the officers even sufficient energy to make us more lively. Certainly it was hot. There had been no sail in sight that I know of all the day, when, I by chance happened to cast my



eyes over the bulwarks, they fell on the topsails of a schooner, just rising above the line of the horizon.

"A sail on the starboard bow!" I sang out to the man who was nominally keeping a look-out forward. He reported the same to the first mate.

"Where away is she?" I heard the captain inquire as he came directly afterwards on deck.

"To the southward, sir; she seems to be creeping up towards us with a breeze of some sort or other," answered Mr. Dobree. "Here, lad," he continued, beckoning to me, "go aloft, and see what you can make of her. Your eyes are as sharp as any on board, if I mistake not, and a little running will do you no harm."

I was soon at the mast-head, and in two minutes returned, and reported her to be a large topsail schooner, heading north-north-east with the wind about south-east.

"I can't help thinking, sir, from her look, that this is the same craft that was lying off New Orleans two days ago," I added, touching my hat to the captain. I don't remember exactly what made me suppose this, but such I know was my idea at the time.

"What, your friend Captain Hawk's craft, the *Foam*, you mean, I suppose?" he observed. "But how can that be? She was bound to the Havanah, and this vessel is standing away from it."

"I can't say positively, sir; but if you would take the glass and have a look at her, I don't think you would say she is very unlike her, at all events," I replied.

"It's very extraordinary if such is the case," said the captain, looking rather more as if he thought I might be right than before.

"Give me the glass, and I'll judge for myself, though it's impossible to say for a certainty what she may be at this distance." Saying this he took the telescope, and in spite of the heat went aloft.

When he came down again, I observed that he looked graver than usual. He instantly gave orders to furl the awning, and to be ready to make sail as soon as the breeze should reach us. "The youngster is right, Mr. Dobree," he said, turning to the mate, and probably not aware that I overheard him. "It's that picarooning craft the *Foam*; and Mr. Hawk, as he calls himself, is after some of his old tricks. I had my suspicions of him when I saw him off



New Orleans ; but I did not think he would venture to attack us."

"He's bold enough to attack anyone, sir," said the mate ; but we flatter ourselves that we shall be able to give a very good account of him, if he begins to play off any of his tricks on us."

"We'll do our best, Mr. Dobree," said the captain ; "for if we do not, we shall have but a Flemish account to render of our cargo, let alone our lives."

I do not know if I before stated that the *Susannah* carried four guns—two long and two cannonades ; and as we had a supply of small arms and cutlasses, we were tolerably able to defend ourselves.

The stranger brought along the breeze with him, but as yet our sails had not felt a particle of its influence. At length, when he was little more than a mile off, a few cat's paws were seen playing on the water ; they came and vanished again as rapidly, and the sea was as smooth as before. In time they came oftener and with more power ; and at length our topsails and topgallant-sails were seen slowly to bulge out as the steadier breeze filled them.

Every stitch of canvas the brig could carry was cracked on her : all would not do. The stranger walked up to us hand over hand. Seeing that there was not the slightest chance of escaping by flight, Captain Searle ordered the foresail and topgallant-sails to be clewed up, and, under our topsails and fore-and-aft sails, resolved to wait the coming up of the enemy, if such the stranger might prove.

On came the schooner, without firing or showing any unfriendly disposition. When she got about a quarter of a mile to windward of us, she hove to and lowered a boat, into which several people jumped and pulled towards us. At the same time up went the Spanish ensign at her peak.

As the boat drew near, she was seen to contain eight men. Four men were pulling, one sat in the bows, and the other three in the stern-sheets. If they were armed, it could not be discovered. When they got within hail, the captain asked them what they wanted.

They pointed to their mouths, and one answered in Spanish, "Aqua, aqua, por amor de Dios."

"They want water, sir, they say," observed the first mate, who prided himself on his knowledge of Spanish.

"That's the reason, then, that they were in such a



hurry to speak to us," said the captain. "But still, does it not strike you as odd that a vessel should be in want of water in these seas?"

"Her water-butts might have leaked out; and some of these Spanish gentry, sir, are very careless about taking enough water to sea," replied the mate, who was biassed by the pleasure he anticipated of being able to sport his Spanish.

"Get a water-cask up on deck, and we'll have it ready to give these fellows, whatever they may be," said our humane captain. "Have some pannikins ready to serve it out to them. Thirst is a dreadful thing, and one would not keep a fellow-creature in that state a moment longer than one could help."

They pulled up alongside, and before anyone attempted to stop them they had hooked on, the man in the bows climbing up on deck, followed by his companions in cloaks, and two of the seamen. They eagerly rushed at the water, and drank up all that was offered them; but I could not help remarking that they did not look like men suffering from thirst. However, a most extraordinary effect was produced on two of them, for they fell down on the deck, and rolled about as if in intense agony. This drew the attention of all hands on them; and as we had no surgeon on board, the captain began to ransack his medical knowledge to find remedies for them.

While he was turning over the pages of his medical guide to find some similar case of illness and its remedy described, the schooner was edging down towards us. As she approached, I observed only a few men on board; and they as the people in the boat had done, were pointing at their mouths, as if they were suffering from want of water. The boat was on the lee side.

There were some sails, and two or three cloaks, apparently thrown by chance at the bottom of the boat. While all hands were engaged in attending to the strangers, and for some minutes no one had looked towards the schooner, on a sudden I heard a loud grating sound—there was the wild triumphant cry of a hundred fierce voices. The seemingly exhausted men leaped to their feet; the helmsman and our captain lay prostrate by blows dealt by our treacherous foes; the second mate and several of the men were knocked down; and before



any of us had time to attempt even any defence of the brig, a set of desperadoes, of all colours and nations, was swarming down on her decks from the rigging of the schooner, while others, who had been concealed in the boat, sprang on board on the lee side. Never was a surprise more complete, or treachery more vile. In an instant we were helplessly in the power of as lawless a band of pirates as ever infested those seas. The captain and mates were first pinioned; the men were sharing the same treatment. I was at the time forward, when, on looking aft, who should I see but Captain Hawk himself, walking the deck of the brig as if he were her rightful commander! He took off his hat with mock courtesy to poor Captain Searle, as he passed him. "Ah, my dear sir, the fortune of war makes you my prisoner to-day," he said, in a sneering tone. "Another day, if my people do not insist on you walking the plank, you may hope, perhaps, to have the satisfaction of beholding me dangling at a yardarm. By the by, I owe you this turn, for you shipped on board your craft a lad who had engaged to sail with me; and I must have him forthwith back again, with a few other articles of your cargo which I happen to require." As he said this, his eye fell on me, and he beckoned me towards him. I saw that there was no use hanging back, so I boldly advanced. "You are a pretty fellow, to desert your colours," he continued, laughing. "You deserve to be treated as a deserter. However, I will have compassion on your youth, if you will swear to be faithful to me in future."

"I never joined your vessel, so I am not a deserter. I cannot swear to serve a man of whose character I know nothing, except that he has taken forcible possession of a peaceable trader." I said this without hesitation, or the least sign of fear. The truth is, I felt too desperate to allow myself to consider what I said or did.

"You are a brave young bantam," he answered, laughingly. "And though all the rest may hang or walk the plank, we will save you to afford us sport; so set your mind at rest on that point."

"Thank you for my life, for I have no wish to lose it, I can assure you," I replied; "but don't suppose I am going to spend it in your service. I shall do my best to get away from you as soon as possible."



"Then we must tie you by a lanyard to the leg," he answered, without at all appearing angry. "Here, Mark Anthony!"—he beckoned to a tall, ill-looking black who had been busy in securing the rest of the crew—"take charge of this youngster, and render an account of him to me by and by, without a hair of his head injured, mind you."

"Yes, sare!" said the Roman general, who, I afterwards found, was a runaway slave from Kentucky. "I'll not singe his whiskers even. Come here, massa!" and seizing me by the shoulder, he dragged me forward away from the rest of the people. "What's your name?" asked my black keeper, as he made me sit down on the bits of the bowsprit.

"Peter, at your service, Mr. Mark Anthony," said I, in as tearless a voice as I could command; for having once taken a line of conduct which seemed to answer well, I determined to persevere in it.

"Den, Massa Peter, you sit dere quiet," he said, with a grin. "I no break your skull, because Captain Hawk break mine if I do. I no let anybody else hurt you for same reason."

From his look and voice I certainly did not flatter myself that he refrained from throwing me overboard from any love he bore me; but, on the contrary, that he would have been much more gratefully employed in making me walk the plank, or in tricing me up to the foreyard.

Meantime, the pirates were busily employed in ransacking the vessel, and in transferring everything of value to them which they could find, from her to their own schooner. The captain and mates were threatened with instant death if they did not deliver up all the money they had on board; and even the crew were compelled to hand over to our captors the small sums they possessed. To make them do this, they were knocked about and beaten unmercifully. And even those who possessed watches and rings were deprived of them, as well as of any clothes which appeared worth taking.

I had often read the history of pirates and of their bold exploits, till I almost fancied that I should like to become one, or, at all events, that I should like to encounter them. But I can assure my friends that the



reality was very different to the fiction ; and as the hideous black was standing over me, ready every moment to knock out my brains, and my companions were suffering all sorts of ill-treatment, I most heartily wished that such gentry as pirates had not been allowed to exist.

Though I tried to look as indifferent as possible, the black would have observed me trembling, had he not been watching to see what his friends were about, no doubt eager to obtain his share of the plunder. The work the pirates were engaged in went on for some time, till even they had tolerably satiated their eagerness for booty ; and then, to my surprise, Captain Hawk went up to Captain Searle and said : " I sent a message by that youngster there to you to look out for yourself, and I never threaten in vain. He goes with me. I want a good navigator ; and as your second mate seems a likely sort of person, I shall take him also. The rest of you may go free ; but remember, that if any of you attempt to betray me, or to appear as witnesses against me, you will dearly pay for it."

Our poor captain, who was almost ruined and heart-broken by the pillage of his ship, said nothing, but bowed his head on his breast, looking as if he would as soon have been killed outright. The unfortunate mate, Abraham Jones, seemed horrified at hearing what his fate was to be ; but he knew enough about the pirates to be aware that it would have been worse than useless to attempt to escape accompanying them. He, however, took the precaution of calling on the crew of the *Susannah* to bear witness that he was compelled through bodily fear and by force to join the pirates ; and he made the best show of resistance that under the circumstances he could venture to do.

From what I saw of him, I do not think that he had so great an objection to joining them as some men might have had. Indeed, I confess that I was very wrong in doing so ; and I feel that a person ought rather to sacrifice his life than consent to commit a crime, even though driven to it with a dagger at his throat. However, both Jones and I fancied that the only chance of saving our own lives, and those of our shipmates, was by our going on board the schooner.

"Remember, Captain Searle, if we get into any mis-



fortune through you, these two will be the first to suffer, and then again I say, look out for yourself!" exclaimed the chief pirate, as he quitted the deck of the *Susannah*.

His people then hove her guns overboard, and removed the small arms on board their own craft, to which the mate and I were also transferred. They also cut the standing and running rigging, which would effectually prevent her from making sail for a long time to come.

The first mate was next released, and was ordered to stand on the poop, on pain of being shot down if he attempted to move while the schooner was near. Her boat was then hoisted in, she was cast off from the brig, and with a cheer of triumph from her crew, she stood away from the *Susannah*.

The first mate wisely did as he was ordered; and it was not till we had got to such a distance that there was little fear of his being hit, that I saw him jump down to release his companions. It was with a sense of misery and degradation I had never before experienced, that I watched till we lost sight of the unfortunate *Susannah*.

## CHAPTER XV

A WEEK passed away on board the *Foam*. Whereabouts we were I had no means of telling; for the captain kept me in his cabin, and would not allow me to go on deck without first asking his leave, nor would he permit me to communicate with Mr. Jones. He treated me very kindly, and even gave me books with which to amuse myself; but I was far from happy. I felt that the schooner might some day be captured by a ship of war, and that I might probably be hung as a pirate before I had an opportunity of establishing my innocence. I also did not like to be a prisoner, even though I was kindly treated; and I thought that most probably when Hawk found I would not join in any piratical acts, and I had resolved that nothing should compel me to do so, his behaviour would change, and that, if I escaped with my life, I should no longer be treated as before.

One day Hawk came into the cabin. "Peter," he observed, "you have disappointed me. I thought you would not be content to lead the idle life you do; I fancied



you would like the excitement of the chase and the fight better than sitting alone in the cabin all day, like a young girl."

"I am not content, Captain Hawk," I replied; "but a prisoner has no choice."

"No one is allowed freedom on board here, unless he has taken the oaths of allegiance to the captain and our laws," he answered, looking steadfastly at me.

"Nothing could induce me to take one or the other!" I exclaimed; "so I suppose I shall remain a prisoner till you release me, or I die."

He seemed to take my answer very calmly; and this encouraged me to proceed and to make an effort to obtain my freedom.

"Captain Hawk," I said, "you have been very kind to me; and though I should have been willing to sail with you before I knew the character of your vessel, I am now most anxious to be put on shore; and if you will liberate me, I will swear most solemnly not to betray you, or any of those who sail with you."

"We do not trust to the oaths of those who do not join us," he answered. "For your own sake, I must make you take part in the next capture we attempt, or else my people will begin to suspect that you are a mere coward, and even I shall be unable to protect you."

"I am no coward, Captain Hawk, and that I will prove any time that I have an opportunity; but I do not choose to commit murder or robbery," I answered, in the same bold tone in which I usually spoke.

"You use harsh terms, youngster, to one who could any moment order you to be hove to the sharks," exclaimed the pirate. "However, I do not quarrel with you for speaking your mind. I once thought as you do, but custom has altered my ideas."

"Then why do you wish me to do what you know I must consider wrong?" I asked.

"Because I have a liking for you, and want a lad of spirit and education to be my companion," he replied. "The old hands I cannot trust—they are as likely to turn against me as serve me—while you, I know, will be faithful for awhile, till you get hardened like the rest, and then——"

"And then," interrupting him, I said, "what would



you do with me? Give me as food for the sharks, I suppose?"

"No, lad; I should let you live to fight your own way in the world, with a charge to keep out of my path," he replied. "But that is not what I wanted to talk to you about. You must come on deck and join in capturing the vessel we are in chase of, for we think she is likely to prove a prize of value."

I am sorry to say that so heartily tired was I of remaining shut up in the cabin, that I was glad of being allowed, on any terms, to see what was going forward on deck.

I thought when I went on deck that nothing would tempt me to take any part in the acts of the pirates, even as far as in assisting to navigate the vessel; but there is something so exciting in the chase of a vessel, that it is difficult not to wish to come up with her. At first I stood merely looking on; but the breeze freshened and rather headed us, and Hawk issued an order to flatten in the fore-and-aft sails, and to brace up the yards. I flew instinctively to the sheets, and found myself pulling and hauling with the rest.

The captain made no remark, nor did he appear even to notice what I had done. The wind was about south, and the chase was to the eastward of us, standing on a bowline. She was a brig of some size, and at the first glance I thought she was a man-of-war; but Hawk pronounced her to be a Spaniard, and homeward bound from Cuba. On hearing this, of course I knew that we must be somewhere to the eastward of that place, and this was the first intimation I had had of our whereabouts.

The chase had not observed us or, if he had, seemed not to be at all suspicious of our character; for he was standing on under easy sail, as if in no way in a hurry to escape from us.

Hawk, who was usually so calm and almost apathetic, walked the deck full of energy and excitement. Every order he gave was uttered in a sharp, quick tone which demanded instant obedience. Everyone partook of the same spirit; and there appeared to be as much discipline and regularity as on board a man-of-war. Even the most lawless vagabonds find this necessary for the attainment of their ends and their own preservation.



We rapidly came up with the chase, and were within about three miles of her, when she began, it seemed, to suspect that all was not right, for sail after sail was set on her till she could carry no more, while she edged away a little from her course, so as to allow every one of them to draw properly. This threw us soon completely to windward, for we held on the same course as before, and she appeared at first to be recovering her lost ground. In a short time we also kept away with the wind almost abeam, a point on which the *Foam* sailed her best.

"Huzza, my lads!" exclaimed the Hawk; "in a short time the chase will be ours, and, if I mustake not, plenty of gold doubloons into the bargain, if you can but make our craft walk along faster."

"Huzza!" shouted the English and American part of the crew, in which the people of other nations joined in their peculiar cries.

The brig once more hauled her wind, and this brought us soon nearer again to her.

Hawk thought it was because the captain saw indications of a shift of wind, and hoped to be placed well to windward. He was scrutinising her narrowly through a telescope. "She does not show any guns," he remarked; "but it is no reason that she has not got them. Get all ready for action, in case she should prove a Tartar."

I scarcely knew what I was about; but I confess that I not only assisted to hand up the powder and shot, but to load and run out the guns.

Neither of us made any further variation in our course; but the chase was, it appeared, a very slow sailer, for we so rapidly came up with her, that five hours after she was seen she was within range of our guns. She did not fire, nor did we; for, supposing her to be unarmed, Hawk was anxious to capture her without in any way injuring her hull or cargo. We sailed on, therefore, as if we were engaged in a friendly race; and no one, by looking at us, could have supposed that we were deadly enemies.

We were getting very near to the chase, and with our telescopes could almost distinguish the faces of those on board, when I observed Abraham Jones, the new second mate of the *Foam*, hurry aft to the captain with a face as pale as a ghost. Hawk laughed and shook his head incredulously. Jones seemed, from his manner, to be



insisting that he was right, for I did not hear what he said. Still we stood on till the chase was within the distance of half the range of our guns. I was again aft. "Hoist our bunting to make him show his colours," I heard Hawk say; "and give him a shot from our bow-chaser to hurry him."

Directly afterwards a broad red flag, without any device was run up at our peak, and with a spout of smoke a shot went flying over the water, and with a crash which made the splinters fly it struck the dark sides of the brig. The effect was instantaneous, and such as was little expected by the pirates.

A flag was run up to the gaff of the brig; but instead of the Spanish ensign, the stars and stripes of the United States were displayed; and the ports being opened as if by magic, eight guns were run out, and luffing up, she let fly her broadside right into our bows. The shot tore up our decks, and knocked away part of our starboard bulwarks, killing two of the people and wounding three more, but without injuring our rigging. Then I saw what sort of men I was mingling with. I cannot describe the fierce rage which took possession of them, the oaths and execrations to which they gave vent. The bodies of the two men who were killed, while yet warm, were thrown overboard directly they were found to be dead, and the wounded were dragged below, and left without a surgeon or anyone to attend on them. Instead of the timid Spanish merchantman we expected to get alongside, we found that this vessel was no other than a United States man-of-war sent to look out for the *Foam*—in fact, that we had caught a Tartar. Hawk, to do him justice, stood undaunted, his energies rising with the occasion. Keeping away a little so as to get our broadside to bear, we fired in return, and the guns being planted high, some of the running rigging was cut away, and her foretopmast was struck, and must have been badly wounded, for some hands were instantly seen going aloft to fish it.

"About ship, my lads—down with the helm; and while she's in stays, give Uncle Sam our larboard broadside."

The sails of the schooner were well full; she quickly came round, and before the brig could follow our example, we sent the shot from our whole broadside flying among her rigging. A loud shout of exultation from our pirate



crew showed their satisfaction at the damage they had done ; for several spars and sails, with blocks and ropes, were seen coming down by the run on deck.

" Now, my lads, let's up stick and away," cried Hawk. " They thought, doubtless, that they were sure of us ; but we'll show them that the *Foam* is not to be caught so easily."

All hands who could be spared from the guns, and I among the rest, flew to their stations to trim sails ; the yards were braced sharp up, and with her head to the south-west, the *Foam* stood away on a bowline from her powerful antagonist. We were not to escape, however, with impunity ; for as soon as the brig's crew had somewhat recovered from the confusion into which the damage done by our shot had thrown them, such guns as could be brought to bear were fired at us with no bad aim. One struck our taffrail, and another killed a man on the forecastle ; but our rigging escaped. Twice the brig missed stays in attempting to come about, from so much of her head-sail having been cut away ; and this, as she all the time was sailing one way and we the other, contributing much to increase our distance. The breeze also favoured us further by freshening, making it more difficult to the enemy to repair damages, while, as we were unhurt, it sent us along all the more rapidly. The Americans are not the people to take the treatment we had given them with calmness, especially as we were so much the smaller, and had less force. At last, at a third trial, the brig came about, while she continued without cessation firing at us. Not much damage was done though our sails had daylight made through them several times by her shot, and another man was killed ; but this casualty the pirates seemed to make light of—it was the fortune of war, and might happen every instant to any of us. The bodies, with scant examination, except to discover whether there was money in their pockets, or rings in their ears or on their fingers, were thrown overboard without a prayer or a sigh. As the shots came whistling over us, they laughed when they saw me bobbing down my head in the hope of avoiding them. I had no fancy, I own, to be shot by people with whom I had not the slightest enmity, nor whom I in any way wished to injure.

We soon found that the brig-of-war, instead of being a slow sailer, was remarkably fast, and that, while we were in chase of her, she must, by towing a sail overboard, or by some other manœuvre, have deadened her way, on purpose



to allow us to come up with her. We had now, therefore, to put the schooner's best leg foremost to get away from her, even before she had got all her gear aloft again. To try and do her further damage, a gun was got over the taffrail and a constant fire was kept up from it as fast as it could be loaded.

I was standing in the waist, with the black, Mark Anthony near me. "Well, Massa Peter, if de brig catch we, we all be hung! how do you like dat?" he asked, with a broad grin which made him look far from pleasing.

"I should be sorry to see any of those who have treated me with kindness hung, or otherwise injured," I replied.

"See! Ha, ha! but how you like feel being hung, Massa Peter?" he said, again grinning more horribly than before.

"Why, I have no fear of that sort, Mr. Mark, I can assure you," I replied; although I confess the disagreeable idea did come across me, that I might possibly not be able to prove that I was not a pirate, should we be captured. "I have had nothing to do with any of the acts committed by the crew of this vessel."

"Ho, ho, ho!" he exclaimed, "den you no pull and haul, and help work de guns which fire at de sip of war? me swear me saw you myself. Ho, ho, ho!"

The black's laughter sounded almost demoniacal in my ears. He spoke the truth, too; I had indeed helped to work the guns; and on the strength of it, like a tempter to evil, he was endeavouring to persuade me, in his rough way, to join the pirates. I did not think it prudent to show him that I clearly saw his aim; but I resolved still to remain firm.

The evening was now drawing on, and fortunately the breeze did not drop. I confess that I was just as anxious to escape from our pursuer as any pirate on board; scarcely more so, perhaps, than the new mate, who had guessed the character of the brig, and had no fancy for having his career cut short so soon.

The brig did not fire at us, as to do so she would have had to yaw and thus lose ground, while we continued to ply her with our long gun. Her foretopsail could not be set while the mast was being fished. An attempt was now made to hoist it; but the breeze at that instant strengthening, away went the mast, rigging, and sail together. A loud cheer arose from our decks; a parting shot was given her from our gun, and in two hours darkness hid her from our sight.



## CHAPTER XVI

I DREAMED all night that I was in the hands of the Americans, with a rope round my neck, and about to be run up at the yardarm. I felt the practical inconvenience of associating with bad company. As soon as I awoke I went on deck, for Hawk no longer placed any restriction on my movements. I fully expected to see the brig-of-war in chase of us. I own I felt somewhat relieved when, on looking round not a sail of any description was to be seen, and the schooner was still bowling along with a brisk breeze on a westerly course.

Towards evening we sighted land, toward which our course was altered. We ran on, and by marks, which I could not distinguish, steered between coral banks, till on a sudden I found that we were entering a lagoon, with trees towering on either side high above our topmast heads. The wind dropped completely as we got within the passage, and the boats were sent ahead to tow. Hawk ordered me into one of them, and I saw no reason to disobey ; indeed, I felt that it would be very foolish not to do my best to please him in matters unconnected with piracy.

The sky was clear overhead, and the stars shone down and were reflected, as in a mirror, on the otherwise ink-black water of the lagoon. As we pulled ahead, we appeared to be passing through a narrow canal, with lofty impenetrable walls on either side, while in the centre rose before our eyes the phantom-like outline of the schooner, her topmast heads and rigging alone being seen against the sky above the dark shadows of the trees.

The splash of our oars was the only sound which broke the dead silence which reigned in this sequestered spot ; while the only light, except from the glittering stars above us, was from the phosphorescent flashes as the blades entered the water, and the golden drops again fell into their parent element.

We pulled on for about half an hour, and then a sort of bay or bight appearing on one side, we brought the vessel into it, and moored her stem and stern fast to the trees. There she lay so completely concealed, that anyone passing up the canal could not by any possibility have seen her, even in broad daylight.

Here we lay for several days repairing damages and



refitting the ship. Where we were I could not learn from anyone on board ; but I suspected that we were in one of the numberless keys among the Bahama or Lucaya Islands ; and I had afterward reason to know that I was right.

Some of the booty taken by the pirates was landed, as, on account of the marks on the bales and other signs, it was likely to lead to their detection should they attempt to dispose of it in its present form. Some of the things were hid away ; the others, after undergoing various operations, were reshipped with such perfectly different marks, that it would have been impossible to detect them. Cunning and trickery seemed to be now the means taken by the pirates to carry on their operations, instead of the bold, daring way in which, as I had read, their predecessors formerly plundered the honest trader.

One morning, while the yards were still on deck and the sails unbent, notice was given from our look-out at the mouth of the lagoon that a sail was in sight, about two miles in the offing.

"What is she ?" asked Hawk of the messenger.

"A barque, deeply laden, captain," replied the man, who was an old pirate. "To my mind she looks as if she would not make a bad prize, if we could get hold of her ; and, as the wind is dropping, and it will be some time before the sea-breeze sets in, I think there will not be much difficulty in doing that."

The captain was pleased at his follower's suggestion ; indeed, he would have risked the loss of his authority had he refused to attend to it. The men were ordered to knock off work, and to get the boats ready, while those who were away in the interior of the little island were recalled to lend their assistance. Everyone was instantly all life and animation. With the prospect of making a prize, even the most sluggish were aroused.

There were three boats, which were soon launched, and oars, arms and provisions were placed in them. To my surprise, Hawk gave the command of them to Abraham Jones, he himself remaining to take charge of the schooner. From what I heard, I found that the pirates expected no difficulty or danger in making the capture.

I, of course, hoped that I should have nothing to do in the matter. What was my horror, then, when Hawk ordered me into the boats, and my old enemy—for I cannot call him



my friend—Mark Anthony, was told to keep me company ! The boats were one long-boat, which pulled eight oars, and carried in all sixteen men, and two large swift-rowing gigs. Jones took command of the long-boat, and I was in one of the gigs. When we got close to the mouth of the harbour, the boat I was in was sent out to reconnoitre.

The stranger was apparently beating up along shore. After waiting a short time, during which she had drawn nearer to us, her sails began to flap against the masts, and the ripple which had been playing on the water disappeared altogether. With the last breath of wind she was put about, and attempted to stand off shore ; but she was very soon left in what is called the “doldrums,” namely, without steerage-way.

I had been watching her attentively. I thought from the first I knew her ; and I now felt certain that she was no other than the ship of which I was in search, the *Mary*. With bitter grief I came to this conclusion ; for I could not but fear that my friends were on board her, and that Captain Dean and his sweet child would be thrown into the hands of the pirates. What, too, would they think of me ? Would they believe me innocent when they saw me in such company ? A thought came across my mind at that instant ; I would pretend not to recognise them. At all risks, I would make the pirates suppose that I joined willingly in this expedition, and perhaps I might be the means of preserving their lives, at all events, if not their property. Perhaps, I thought, my steps might have been led providentially through the various adventures in which I had engaged, for this very purpose. The very idea made my heart beat quick with a sensation almost of joy. I did not see how it was to be accomplished ; but I felt assured that the Power which had hitherto guided me would point out the way.

When the officer of the boat I was in saw the barque becalmed, he gave the signal to our consort, and without further delay we three pulled out together towards her.

For some time no one on board appeared to have observed us. At last someone saw us, and two or three glasses were directed towards us ; but we did not seem to have created any alarm, or even suspicion among them. Thus we were enabled to approach without any preparation having been made to prevent our getting on board. When it was too late, probably from the eagerness with which they saw us



dash alongside, they suspected that all was not right, and a few of the hands ran to the arms-chest, while others attempted to slue round one of the two guns the barque carried, and to point it down at the boats. Before they could do so, we were scrambling up her sides.

"Oh, oh, Massa Peter, you hurry enough now to turn pirate, when you tink someting to be got!" shouted Mark Anthony, as he saw my eagerness to be one of the first on deck.

The cutter boarded on one side, the two gigs on the other—one at the fore-rigging, the other at the mizzen-chains; so that the crew had to separate into three divisions to oppose us. The crew thus weakened, the people from the long-boat gained easily a footing on deck. They drove the crew aft, who were now attacked in the rear by the party from one of the gigs. I was in the foremost gig, and we had no one to oppose us. The only defence made was by the master, his mates, and two of the crew, who had secured cutlasses. They stood together on the larboard side of the poop, and boldly refused to yield up the ship, till they knew the authority of those attacking her.

I saw at a glance that my fears were well founded. There stood my kind friend, Captain Dean, and in the centre of the group, his sweet little daughter Mary. Oh, how I wished to have the strength of a hundred men, to drive all the pirates into their boats, and to release my friends!

No sooner had I appeared above the bulwarks than Mary saw me. She uttered a cry of surprise, for she recognised me at once. It attracted her father's attention. His cutlass was struck from his grasp by Jones, the two mates were knocked down, and all further resistance was at an end.

This easy victory prevented the pirates from being as bloodthirsty as they might otherwise have proved; but, as a precautionary measure, Jones ordered both the officers and crew to be bound to the masts and rigging while the ship was being searched.

I had rushed aft, in the hopes of being of some assistance to Captain Dean should he have required it—how, I scarcely knew. I thought I would have interposed my body, should a sword have been raised to strike him. When I saw him no longer making any defence and uninjured, I stopped, and was endeavouring to turn away to consider what I should do; but Mary's eye had followed me, and, as she saw me approaching, she uttered my name in his ear. On losing his



sword, he had thrown himself on one of the hen-coops placed against the bulwarks, where he lay, clasping his child in his arms ; and even the pirates seemed to respect him, for no one molested him.

Most of the pirates were engaged in dragging the prisoners to the masts to bind them. Jones had gone into the cabin. I saw that no one was observing me. I hurried past my old friends. " Hush ! " I whispered, in a voice they could just hear ; " I am honest still. Do not recognise me—I will save you if I can ! "

" I knew he was true and good," said Mary, kissing her father, and trying to turn her eyes from me.

What courage did her words give me ! That sweet child's trusting friendship was a reward for all I had suffered. I resolved to abstain still from the evil courses to which my companions were endeavouring to lead me. I gave a glance over the stern, as if I had been looking to see what had become of the gig which had boarded at that end of the ship, and I again passed my friends without noticing them. I guessed that Mark Anthony would have been watching me, and I was right.

" What, you like pirating, Massa Peter ? You run about like little dog, quite frisky—not know what to do," he remarked, with a grin. He was fond of giving things their proper names. Jones would have been horrified at being called a pirate ; and even Hawk did not like the term, though in his bitter moments he used it.

" I have no help for it," I answered, with, I hope, excusable duplicity. " The fact is, Mark, I had formed a wrong impression of you gentlemen ; and in future I hope to make as bold a robber as the best of you."

" Berry good, berry good, my boy," said the black, grasping my fist with his huge rough hand. " Me tell Captain Hawk, Massa Peter now take oath." I had not thought of that dreadful ceremony when I boasted of being ready to turn pirate ; and, as I had a true idea of the sacredness of an oath, I knew that I must be betrayed if I was asked to take it, by refusing, as I must, to do so.

Jones now came out of the cabin, and went up to the captain. " Captain Dean," he said, " for such, I find is your name, you must order your people into the boats, to tow this vessel close in shore, where you must anchor, to discharge some of your cargo."



"I have no longer command of this vessel," replied the captain; "if the people choose to obey you, I have no power to prevent them."

"We have the means of making them do what we please, though," exclaimed Abraham Jones, "Here, you, get your boats into the water, and tow us ahead." He pointed to several of the *Mary's* crew, who were released, and compelled by the pirates to do as he ordered. The pirates' long-boat also went ahead, to assist in towing; while four men were stationed at the bows with muskets in their hands, to fire on the boats should they attempt to escape. The rest who remained, I zealously assisting them, clewed and brailed up the sails. When ordered by Jones, I, without hesitation, seized a musket and pointed it at the boats.

Captain D'An, still holding Mary in his arms, sat aft, without moving. He seemed completely stunned with the blow which had fallen on him, for the cruel robbery would prove his ruin.

It was an arduous operation, towing the vessel in. I have before described the heat of a tropical sun; and very hot work indeed was this towing. At last, after five hours' incessant labour, we got, as near as the depth of water would allow, to the mouth of the harbour, and the anchor was dropped to the bottom.

Overcome by the heat, the pirates now came out of the boats, and, rushing below, brought a spirit cask on deck, which they forthwith broached. I trembled for the consequences. Jones did all he could to prevent them becoming intoxicated; but they only laughed and jeered at him, and asked who made him an officer over them.

I ought to have said that, as soon as the barque had anchored, those of her crew who were in their boats were turned adrift without oars or masts or sails, or anything to guide them, and allowed to float wherever the current might carry them. As it happened, there was but little current there, and consequently they remained but a short distance off, afraid to attempt either to regain the ship or to reach the shore.

Louder and louder grew the mirth of the pirates, and wilder their looks and gestures, as the powerful liquor they were swallowing took effect on their brains. I saw Mary cling closer to her father in fear and trembling, all the time watching me with furtive glances, lest she should be observed by her captors. I kept my musket in my hand, pretending



to be watching the boats ; and as they were now astern, I came aft for that purpose. What might have been the result of the prolonged orgies of the pirates it is impossible to say ; but just as two or three had begun to stagger on their feet, and, with knives in their hands, to cast their bloodshot eyes round as if looking for some victim for their insane fury, a small boat shot out of the harbour and rapidly approached the ship.

In a few minutes Captain Hawk stood on the deck of the prize, just in time to prevent one of his men from killing the first mate of the vessel, who remained all the time bound to the mast. He then turned fiercely on Jones, and reprimanded him for not having restrained the others more effectually. With a blow of his fist he knocked down the three most drunken of his followers, and the rest appeared instantly sobered. Without a murmur they threw the remainder of the spirits overboard, and under his directions commenced hoisting out such part of the cargo as he considered most valuable.

Captain Deane was not molested nor was any notice taken of the boats which were drifting in shore, and would, I hoped, reach it, and thus enable the crews to find means by which to return to the ship, and perhaps to escape. On a sudden it seemed to strike some of the pirates that there was no use working while there were people they could come to work for them ; and to my sorrow two armed boats were instantly sent off to tow back the two which were drifting away. Resistance was vain, so the poor fellows were compelled to work in hoisting the cargo out of their own ship, and afterwards in pulling up the lagoon to the schooner. When I saw that the pirates allowed the strangers to see their place of concealment, I trembled for the fate of the latter, and feared greatly that the result would be their destruction, to prevent their discovering it to others.

The boats were all away, and six of the pirates, with Captain Hawk and myself, were the only persons besides the prisoners who remained on board. Hawk had observed my apparent zeal, I suspect, for he said to me, " I am glad to see that you are overcoming your foolish scruples, Peter ; and to show the confidence I place in you I will give you charge of the old master and his daughter. Take care that they do not communicate with any of the other prisoners or assist to release them."



My heart leaped within me at the chance thus offered of assisting my friends ; at the same time I considered whether I ought to betray the confidence placed in me.

"I'll keep an eye on them, sir," I answered evasively, and at the same time I took my post opposite to them, with my musket in my hand. I observed that Máry turned her head away from me, lest Hawk should observe the satisfaction she felt at this arrangement. Hawk afterwards, with all his followers, went below to make a more minute examination of the nature of the cargo.

As soon as they had disappeared, I ran up to Mary and her father. I knelt down ; I kissed their hands, and with tears in my eyes assured them that I had been longing for them, and was guiltless of willingly joining the pirates. "I will risk my life to liberate you," I added. "Be constantly on the watch for whatever may occur. Perhaps to-night something may favour our projects ; perhaps it may be weeks before I find the means of aiding you."

"I knew you would, I knew you would !" exclaimed Mary. "Father, Peter will help us to escape." Captain Dean, by a strong effort roused himself from the state of stupor into which he was nearly falling. He took my hand and grasped it tightly.

"Peter," he said, "I will trust you, though appearances are sorely against you. For the sake of humanity for this sweet child's sake—I pray that you will not deceive us."

I again assured him that I was true, and that, when I had time, I would explain how it all had happened ; and then fearful of being seen, I retired to my post to act sentinel as before.

On Hawk's returning on deck, he ordered Captain Dean and Mary into the cabin below and told them that they must remain there till he had determined what should be done with the ship. My poor friend obeyed without a murmur, and, taking Mary by the hand, conducted her to his state-room, into which he entered and closed the door. I heard him say, while I was still close to it, Kneel, my child, kneel, and pray to God to protect us."

Most of the pirates returned to the schooner for the night, leaving the prisoners, with the third mate and a small guard, including me, in charge of them. Just before he left the vessel, Hawk called me aside.

"I leave you on board of the prize, Peter," he said



"because, though you are young and untried, yet you have more of humanity about you than the rest of my followers, and I can place more confidence in you. I must, however, have you take the oath of our band, to the effect that you will not desert the ship, betray a comrade, or separate from the rest till our compact is dissolved by mutual agreement."

I thought, as seriously and rapidly as I could, whether such an oath would not only preclude my own escape, but prevent me from assisting my friends. "It must effectually bind me to the pirates, and probably cause my death; but if I refuse to take it, I shall lose all chance of aiding Captain Dean and Mary so for their sakes I will do as I am asked." I told Hawk I would no longer refuse to take the oath he proposed.

"Then swear," he said repeating it, while a number of the pirates gathered round.

"I swear," I said in a voice which must, I thought, betray my emotion. The pirates cheered and welcomed me as a brother among them. At that instant a peal of thunder echoed along the rocks of the shore, and vivid lightning darted from the sky.

I presumptuously thought at the time that the anger of Heaven was thus shown for the crime I had committed. I trembled violently; and had it not been dark, my confusion would have been discovered. The pirates were, however, in a hurry to depart, and, stepping into their boats, which were again deeply laden, they pulled up the harbour, leaving me and my companions in charge of the ship and twice as many prisoners as we ourselves numbered.

## CHAPTER XVII

I DID not go to sleep, it may be supposed, but walked the deck, considering what I should do. I had never spoken much with the third mate, and was now commanding officer; and I felt less inclination than ever to enter into conversation with him, so I only went near him when I was obliged to do so, to report that all was right.

He was a surly ruffian, in no way superior to the rest of the people, except that, from having been at sea all his life, he was a tolerable seaman. It was with some difficulty that I gained permission from him to carry some



food and water to the prisoners, or I believe he would have allowed them to starve. I dared not tell them that I was their friend, lest some might incautiously betray me. Wherever I went, also, Mark Anthony followed, and narrowly watched my proceedings. I observed him, though I pretended not to do so, and was trying to devise some means of lulling the suspicions he evidently still entertained of me.

The mate's name was John Pinto, a Portuguese by birth, though he said he was an American, and he spoke English well. I knew that he was addicted to liquor, when he could indulge in it without fear of the consequences. I had found several bottles of fine old Jamaica rum in the cabin, so I brought one up on deck, with a monkey full of cold water, and saying that I was very thirsty after the day's work, and must have a glass, asked him if he would have one also. He consented and I poured him out a stiff tumblerful, the strength of which was concealed by the coolness of the water.

"Very good indeed!" he growled out. "Peter, you understand these things; give me another." I did so, and made it even stronger than the first. He liked it accordingly even better, and took several others in quick succession. I was not afraid of his growing furious, for, from the nature of the man, I knew that he would only become stupid, and finally would fall asleep. With much satisfaction I saw this effect take place.

"Now, I am commanding officer," I thought, "and I will see what is next to be done." Just as I had thought this, and had stood up to look around me, I felt the hot breeze coming off the land. An idea struck me, if I could but liberate the prisoners, they might run the vessel far away to sea before the morning, and out of the reach of the pirates.

How to accomplish this was the next thought. Go with them I could not, on account of my oath, and I was also bound to the rest. There was a sentry placed before Captain Dean's cabin. I determined to make him tipsy also. I had recourse to the old rum, and with the same effect it had on the mate. Two men walked the deck near the main hatchway, the other four were forward. The prisoners were in the hold, and my great difficulty was to get to them.



I went on deck to watch the two men. They were sitting down, and I had hopes were asleep. Mark Anthony, whom I most feared, was forward. The night had become very dark, so I went close to them without being perceived, and I could distinguish by the tones of their voices that all four were talking together. On this I crept back to the cabin. The sentry was snoring in complete insensibility, so I dragged him on one side, and tapped softly at the door of the state-cabin.

"It is Peter," I whispered. "Open the door, I have something to say." Mary knew my voice, and opened it before I had done speaking, for I had unlocked it from the outside.

"Captain Dean," I said, in a hurried tone, "the wind is off the shore; two of your guards are unconscious from drink; and if I can but make the rest so, or you can manage to overpower them, you may regain possession of your vessel. I can neither assist you further, nor can I accompany you, for at all risks I must return to the schooner."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Mary, "you must go with us; we cannot leave you behind with those dreadful men."

"I have taken an oath, Mary, and I must remain," I replied. "But have no fears for me. I shall, I trust, finally escape from the toils which surround me, and we may meet again." For some time I continued in the same strain, and finally succeeded in winning her over to my view of the case. I had less difficulty in persuading her father that there was no other chance of escape; and I urged on him the duty he owed to his owners, as well as to his child, if not to himself.

With several bottles of old rum I returned on deck, and with one in my hand I sat myself down near the two men guarding the hatchway.

"The mate finds this stuff very good," said I; "will you take a glass?" They did not say no, but pronounced it excellent.

"The rest should not be kept out of their share," I remarked; "I'll take them some." To this they would not agree; and wishing to keep it all to themselves, drank it down much faster than they would otherwise have done. I took the empty bottle away, and put a full one in its place, much to their surprise, for they did not suspect



my trick. Favouring my design, the others heard them praising the rum, and asked them what they were about. I instantly ran forward with two bottles.

"They have got some spirits which they think very good, and I have brought you some bottles. There are several more stowed away somewhere on deck, and if I can find them I will bring them to you."

"Bear a hand and bring them to us, but do not let Pinto see you, or he will be laying an embargo on them," said one of the men in a low voice, thinking the mate might hear him.

In a short time all the pirates, including even Mark Anthony, were lying about the decks in a state of helpless intoxication.

With my knees trembling with agitation, I hurried aft, and told Captain Dean what had occurred. Leaving Mary in the cabin, he accompanied me on deck, and we instantly set to work to get the hatches off. We succeeded, and, going below, found the mates and crew, most of them overcome with fatigue, fast asleep. It was the work of a minute to rouse them up, to explain what had happened, and to cut loose the lanyards with which they were secured.

I told them that they must make a simultaneous rush on deck; that they must bind me with the rest of the pirates; that they must put us into a boat with a couple of small sculls, just to enable us to reach the shore; and that they must then cut their cable, and get to sea as fast as possible.

"I do not see what should prevent us from carrying all hands off prisoners," said the first mate. The idea that they might do so had not occurred to me. I wished most cordially that they would, but my oath made it incumbent on me to return if I had the power.

"We must do as this young man requires," said Captain Dean. "We will abide by his decision."

"Then I must beg that you will without delay put me and my companions into a boat, and be off yourselves," I answered with a sinking heart.

I crept first on deck, and lay down among the men forward. Presently the crew rushed on deck, and in a few minutes the previous order of things was completely reversed, and the pirates were bound and floating help-



lessly in a boat by themselves. The black, who was near me, was the only one who was aroused, and he saw me being bound like himself. He would have cried out, but a gag thrust into his mouth effectually prevented him.

With mingled feelings of pain and joy I saw, through the gloom, the sails of the *Mary* drop from their yards, and her cable being cut, she glided away into the obscurity of the distance. I uttered a prayer for the safety of those on board.

It was broad daylight before any of the people came to their senses. The black had been all the time, in a degree, awake, though his intellects were not very bright; he, however, had been too tightly bound hand and foot to move, while his mouth was too securely gagged to allow him to cry out. I arose with pretended difficulty; I saw his keen eye glaring on me.

When the black saw me move, he made various strange noises, to call my attention to his condition. I showed him that my hands were bound, but I contrived to crawl towards him; and though his hands were behind his back he contrived so far to loosen the cords which bound mine (they were, in truth, but slightly secured, and I could have released them without aid) that I got them perfectly free. The first thing I did was to take the gag from his mouth; and oh, what a torrent of abuse flowed instantly out of it! He did not, however, suspect me, as I thought he would. The rest were still overcome with the liquor.

The wind was still off the shore, and the boat continued drifting out to sea, her speed increased by a current which set to the southward. The black recognised the mouth of the lagoon, which he knew well, but I could not make it out. The two sculls were found, and, bestowing many maledictions on his companions for not being able to drink with impunity, he made me take one of them, and attempt to pull towards the shore. I saw that even if I did so to the utmost, we could make no way against the breeze and the current setting in an opposite direction.

The sun rose, and struck down with burning fury on our heads; and I knew, when the wind fell, it would be hotter still. At length I began to feel the pangs of hunger, and, to my satisfaction, I found that some considerate friend had put a few biscuits and a keg of water into the



boat. With this I refreshed myself, and so did the black ; and I began to hope that he was grateful to me for releasing him from the gag, and that he would bear witness to having seen me bound like the rest.

When we found that we could make no way with the paddles, we gave it up, and set to work to try and revive our companions. We unlashed their arms and legs, and by degrees they came to themselves. They were very much surprised at what had happened, and could not account for it.

"Well, no use talking here," observed Mark Anthony, whose wits being brighter than theirs, was for active measures. "If we no get on shore, we all die togeder."

I suggested that we might manufacture some more paddles out of the bottom boards ; and that by bending our handkerchiefs and jackets together we might form a sail, which, when the sea-breeze set in, might enable us to reach some part of the coast. No one having any better advice to offer, mine was adopted : two more pairs of paddles were formed ; but though they enabled us to make some little headway, it was very slowly.

My companions now grew weary ; and the looked-for breeze not arriving, they began to lose their tempers, as people are apt to do, even without so much reason after a debauch.

"It was all your fault, youngster," suddenly exclaimed the mate, turning to me ; "you brought me the stuff which capsized me."

"And he brought it to us," said one of the men who had been guarding the main hatchway.

"And to us also," cried those who had been forward.

"Den," exclaimed the black, giving a most diabolical grin from ear to ear, which made my blood run cold, "he done it on purpose : dere was someting in it, no doubt."

Oh, how my heart sank within me ; for their suspicions once being set on the right scent, I feared they would discover the truth. However, I put a bold face on the matter, and answered, "I found the spirit—I tasted it, and thought it very good, so I brought it to you. I am in as bad a condition as any of you ; so I gained nothing by treachery, if I was guilty of it."

"Ah, but you hoped to do so !" exclaimed the mate.



"It wasn't your wish to remain with us, but you could not help yourself." Thus the discussion went on, till they arrived very nearly at the truth.

They were threatening me, when the black, who was standing up, on looking towards the mouth of the harbour, espied two boats pulling out towards us. Our comrades must have seen us with their glasses from the shore, and were coming to our assistance. They could not possibly be more than four miles off. Scarcely had the rest time to discover the specks they seemed on the water, when I observed a sail just rounding the west side of the island, and standing, with a fresh breeze, directly for us. It was not long before she was discovered by the rest.

She was a large brig, and, from the squareness of her yards, she looked like a man-of-war. Down she came rapidly on us, as yet unperceived by the people in the boats, as a point of high land, covered with trees, hid her completely from them. The black jumped up, and watched her, with lips apart and staring eyeballs, for some time.

"De brig we fought de oder day!" he exclaimed. "If he see we, den we all hang." And he sank down at the bottom of the boat, intimating to the rest to follow his example.

The boats from the shore were all this time approaching us. At last they saw the topgallant-mastheads of the brig over the point; but I suppose they fancied they were those of the *Mary* for they continued their course. In a short time, however, they perceived their mistake; but the brig had got clear of the land, and they were full in view of any sharp eyes stationed on her tops. They directly pulled back, and we lost sight of them almost immediately.

The brig came on, and at first, after rounding the point, stood on a course which would have carried her inside of us; but, on discovering the boat, she again stood towards us. The fright of all hands in the boat was excessive, and the bold, blustering pirates proved themselves cowards indeed. The African was the bravest, for the death he expected had few terrors for him. He even had presence of mind sufficient to suggest that we should invent a plausible tale of having been cast adrift by the rest of the crew of a ship who had run off with her. All eagerly grasped at the idea; but before the tale was



thoroughly concocted, the brig was alongside of us, and we were very unceremoniously hauled on board.

We were immediately taken before the captain and his officers in full uniform, who stood round him on the quarter deck.

"What brought you out here?" he demanded of the mate, who from his dress seemed to be the officer. Pinto told the tale which had just been invented.

"And what are those boats doing in-shore of us?" was the next question.

"I know nothing of the boats," was Pinto's answer; but the appearance and dogged manner of my companions had raised suspicions in the minds of the American officers which were not easily allayed.

Meantime the brig had hauled her wind, and was standing in-shore with the lead going, in the direction the boats had taken.

The brig, I found, was the *Neptune*, Captain Faith. She was a remarkably fine vessel, carrying nineteen guns, and had been sent out expressly to look for the *Foam*.

We were all kept separate from each other, and were questioned one by one. What the others said I do not exactly know, but I have reason to believe that not one of them told the same story. I was the last interrogated. "And what have you got to say for yourself?" asked the lieutenant.

"That I was last night put into this boat with the rest, with my hands bound behind my back," I replied.

"And you believe that the people who so treated you have run off the ship to turn pirates?"

"I do not believe it," I answered. "I knew the captain, who was a kind friend of mine, and the ship was his own. If you ever meet Captain Dean of the *Mary*, he will corroborate what I say."

"This is a new version of the story," replied the lieutenant.

"It is the true one; of that you may be assured," I replied. "I would willingly tell you more, but I cannot, so there is no use questioning me."

"We shall soon see that," he observed. "Those who will not speak when they can, must be made to speak."

I was silent; for if I said more, I was afraid of running



the risk of breaking my oath, by betraying Hawk and his followers.

The attention of all on board was now taken up by the manning of the boats, which were, I found, to be sent up forthwith, on an expedition in search of the pirates. Oh, how I longed to warn the brave men I saw with such joyful alacrity getting ready, of the great risk they were about to run! The schooner, I knew, had ten guns on board, and the pirates would be able so to place her as to offer a stout resistance, if not to defeat the man-of-war's boats completely.

Four of the brig's boats were sent away, to which was added the one in which I had been taken; so that there was a pretty strong flotilla engaged in the expedition. Remembering, however, the extreme narrowness of the passage, I felt that if the pirates landed, and simply fired down upon their assailants, they might pick every one of them off, without the slightest risk to themselves.

With aching eyes I saw them enter the mouth of the lagoon; and perhaps no one on board felt a greater interest in their proceedings than I did.

## CHAPTER XVIII

I WAS allowed to remain on deck, under charge of a sentry, but was in no other way treated as a prisoner. Half an hour elapsed, during which the boats were probably looking for the pirate vessel, without a shot being heard. It was a time of the most intense anxiety. At length, as if to make amends for the previous silence, the roar of big guns and musketry was heard reverberating in quick succession among the rocks.

Five minutes elapsed—they seemed an hour. Then again the hubbub recommenced, with greater fury than before. So excited did many of the men, and even the officers become, that I almost thought they would leap into the water, and try to swim to shore, to join in the combat.

The prolonged fight made me feel very doubtful of the result of the contest. There was a pause, and then a loud, fearful explosion, and the masts and spars and fragments of the pirate schooner could be seen rising in the air. She



had blown up ; but still it might be questioned who were the victors.

There was another interval of the most intense anxiety. In vain we waited for the reappearance of the boats, till the *Neptune's* people began to fear that their brave shipmates had been all destroyed. Then first one boat was seen to emerge from among the trees, then another, and lastly four appeared—thus one only was missing. They pulled slowly on board, and were seen to be heavily laden.

With a shout of joy and hearty congratulation, they were received alongside ; but the entire satisfaction at the success of the expedition was somewhat mitigated when it was found that several of their number were missing. They had brought off ten prisoners, most of whom were wounded. Some of the packages which had been taken from the *Mary* were also brought on board. Neither Hawk nor Abraham Jones were among the prisoners ; I therefore concluded that they were killed or had escaped. The prisoners, to my horror, at once recognised me and the rest of their comrades, addressing us familiarly by our names and thus completely identifying us with themselves. I suppose they did this from a feeling of revenge, from fancying that we had been the cause of their disaster. The captain, on this, ordered us all to be secured and treated as prisoners alike, till he had time to investigate the matter fully.

On hearing that there was a considerable amount of booty on shore, the captain despatched fresh hands to bring it off. I longed to caution them that Hawk, if he was alive, was a man very likely to play them a trick, but I had no opportunity of doing so till they had gone. The boats were sent away, and I was afterwards had up for examination. I then, as the schooner was destroyed, no longer felt myself bound by my oath to keep silence ; I therefore gave a rapid sketch of my adventures, as the best way of accounting for being found in such bad company. The captain laughed at my statements, which, he said, were altogether incredible, and assured me that he fully believed that I deserved hanging as much as the rest.

I assured him that I had not deceived him, and requested him to confront the negro, Mark Anthony, with me, and that he would corroborate all my assertions. Had I



known more of the worst part of human nature, I might not have made this request. When the black was brought up, he gave a malicious grin at me, and, putting his hand on his heart, assured the captain and officers that, as he spoke the truth, I was the most wicked, vicious youngster on board the schooner, to which he knew that it was useless to deny that he belonged ; that he was perfectly innocent of any piratical act, having been carried off to act as cook ; that he had at first taken an interest in me, and had done his best to reform me, but in vain, and that lately he had given my case up as hopeless.

"What do you mean by lately ?" I asked.

"Just de last six months or so," he answered, with the greatest effrontery.

"I beg, gentlemen, that his answer may be noted ; for I hope to be able to prove that I have not been on board the schooner as many weeks," I said, with a calm voice, which had, I think, some effect on my hearers.

There was such a mass of false swearing and contradictory evidence taken during the examination, that the naval officers were compelled to reserve any judgment on the case till they should arrive in port, when it might be handed over to the lawyers to sift to the bottom. Greatly to my satisfaction, the boats returned laden with further goods taken from the *Mary* ; but it required two more trips before they could all be brought off. The task was at last accomplished, without any of the pirates having made their appearance, and sail was then made to the northward.

I found that our destination was Charleston, to which port the brig belonged, and where my trial and that of the other prisoners would take place.

At length we arrived. I was conveyed with the other prisoners on shore to jail ; and before many days were over our trial commenced. The fate of those taken in the schooner was easily settled. Several robberies were proved against them ; and she was sworn to as the same vessel which had fired into the brig off the coast of Cuba, and had there carried the pirate flag, besides having also killed and wounded several officers and men in the United States navy.

The trial of the people in the boat next came on. The others swore that we belonged to the schooner ; and the



negro, in the bitterness of his feelings against me, had acknowledged the same. I told my history as my best defence.

"Ask him if he can swear he no fire de big guns—he no pull and haul—when we fight de brig," exclaimed the malignant black, perfectly indifferent to his own fate. I held my peace.

"Prisoner at the bar, can you swear that you did not aid and abet those engaged in making unlawful war against the United States brig *Neptune*?"

"I cannot swear to that, because, in a fatal fit of forgetfulness, seeing everyone excited around me, I might have pulled and hauled at the ropes of the schooner."

"An acknowledgment of his guilt!" exclaimed the counsel for the Government; and I, with all the rest, was adjudged to be hung, at the end of the week, at the yardarm of the brig which had captured us. Never was a nest of more atrocious pirates broken up, said the public papers, commenting on the trial, and never were men adjudged to meet a more deserved doom.

Now the reader will almost be prepared to know how I was saved. I must own that I never expected to be hung. I felt that I was innocent and I trusted that some means would be offered for my escape.

Just as I was being led out of court, there was a cry of "Witnesses! witnesses for the trial of the pirates!" Looking up, I saw several seafaring men entering the court, and among them two persons whose appearance at that juncture made my heart leap into my mouth with joy and gratitude, and proved that the finger of God had directed their coming. Need I say that they were Captain Dean and Mary, and that the other people were the crew of the barque, released from the power of the pirates by my means?

Their story created a great sensation in court; and Captain Dean was ready to swear, from his knowledge of me, that I had no willing participation in any of the acts of the pirates. My story was now believed; but I had acknowledged having worked the guns in the action with the brig, and I had, by the evidence of all present, willingly, and of my own accord, rejoined the pirates, though every opportunity had been offered me of escaping.

I urged my oath in extenuation of my conduct, and



that I was bound to return. This was not held in law to be any excuse. I had no business to take an oath of that nature, it was asserted by the counsel for the Government. The sentence of death against me was, however, rescinded, on account of the many extenuating circumstances brought forward in my favour ; but still I could not be set at liberty.

The sentence of the people who had been found with me in the boat was afterwards commuted to imprisonment for fourteen years ; and I was offered a conditional pardon, provided I would volunteer to serve for two years on board a ship of war just then about to sail, and short of hands.

I was sorry to be again thus separated from Captain Dean and Mary ; but as I had no dread of the service, I, without much hesitation, accepted the offer. " I will do my duty and retrieve my character," I thought ; " and as, I trust, there is no chance of a war with England, I see no reason to prevent me."

## CHAPTER XIX

THE next day I found myself transferred on board the United States corvette *Pocahontas*, of twenty guns, and one hundred and fifty men, including officers, marines and petty officers. I found that she was bound to the North Seas, to look after the interests of the United States fisheries. She was strongly built and strengthened, so as to contend with the bad weather she might expect to meet and the loose ice she was also likely to encounter.

The day after I had become one of the crew, while I was below, I was informed that a person was alongside inquiring for me. I looked over the side, and there I saw, as I expected, Captain Dean and Mary. They came on deck, and Mary was very nearly throwing her arms about my neck and kissing me, while her father took both my hands and held them in his.

" I owe everything to you, Peter ! " he said, and the tears stood in his eyes—" my life and property, and more, the safety of this dear child ; and I do feel most cruelly not being able to make you any return. In England the sovereign would have given you a free pardon to a certainty ; here, in such a case as yours, we have no one to appeal



to. I have introduced myself to your captain, and, as he seems a kind man, I trust he will interest himself in you. I beg to offer you an outfit, which I have brought on board; and I fear there is little else I can do for you. When you come back I shall be on the look-out for you, and then you must fulfil your promise of sailing with me. Make yourself a thorough seaman in the meantime, and I think I can promise you very soon the command of a ship."

Mary joined in, and entreated me first to take care of myself, and then to come back to Charleston to rejoin them.

"You know, Peter, I shall be nearly grown up by that time," she said, in her sweet, innocent, and lively manner, though she was half crying at the time. "Then, you know, if you become first mate, I shall be able to act as father's second mate; so we shall have quite a family party on board the dear old ship."

Thus we talked on, joking often through our sorrows, till it was time for my friends to go on shore. With heavy hearts we parted. Had we been able to see the future, how much heavier would they have been! I found in the chest which they had brought me, numberless little things, which all told of sweet Mary's care and forethought.

The next morning at break of day, the boatswain's whistle roused me from my slumbers, and his gruff voice was heard bawling out, "All hands up anchor," followed with another pipe, "Man the capstan."

To a person accustomed to the merchant service, where, from the few hands which can be employed, the duty must be carried on slowly and cautiously, the work on board a man-of-war appears as if done almost by magic. The rapidity and certainty of action is gained only by great arrangement, method, and practice. Every man on board has his proper post and particular duties; and all are accustomed to listen for and obey the signal of command, be it the human voice, the boatswain's pipe, a peculiar flag, or the report of a great gun or musket. The crew are separated into two divisions, with their respective officers: these divisions are called watches—the star-board and larboard because one does duty, or watches, while the other rests below,

The commander, Captain Gierstein, was a man who had seen much of the world, and was, I have reason to



believe; a very good seaman; so was Mr. Stunt, the first lieutenant, who was a disciplinarian of the most rigid school; and certainly the ship was in very good order as a man-of-war.

How the second-lieutenant, Mr. Dunning, contrived to gain his rank I do not know, for he was nothing at all of a practical seaman.

There were several of my own messmates with whom I became intimate. Though rough in manner, they were kind of heart; and I will say of two or three of them, that all their sentiments were such as no gentleman need have been ashamed of possessing. I found them both agreeable and instructive companions; and I was glad to enjoy their friendship, the more from the very want of kindly feelings which prevailed generally throughout the ship. Andrew Thompson was my greatest chum. He was a true-hearted seaman, every inch of him. He had been all his life at sea, and had had his eyes open, as the saying is, all the time. He used to take great delight in describing the countries he had visited, and the ports and harbours in which he had brought up, as also in giving me instruction in all branches of seamanship.

My other friend was called Terence O'Connor, an Irishman, as his name betokens, with all the good qualities generally ascribed to the natives of that country. He liked me, as being a countryman, in the first place; and secondly, because I liked him. He was still young, and had nothing of the mentor about him, like Thompson. He was brave, and true as steel. I should not say that he was a first-rate seaman; but he was active and energetic, and he knew how to obey—indeed he was a capital hand to have as a mate.

There was also an English lad I liked much, Tom Stokes by name. He was not very bright, and he used to be sadly bullied by the crew; but as I was strong, I could and did protect him, and his gratitude won my regard.

It was early in the year, but for some reason or other we were ordered to get northward as fast as we could. For the first week we had calms, and then the wind came ahead, so that our progress was very slow. Instead of running through the Gulf of St. Lawrence, we were to keep on the eastern coast of Newfoundland, and to approach the northern shore of Labrador.



I believe we had got a considerable way to the eastward of where we should have been ; but of that I have no certain knowledge, as a foremast man has no means of ascertaining the ship's position, except when she makes the land, unless the officers choose to tell him. At last a fine westerly breeze sprang up, and we went gaily along.

We continued standing to the northward ; and, as far as we could learn, we were considerably to the eastward of Newfoundland. The change of temperature made us glad of warm clothing ; but as yet there was no cold to be complained of. We might have guessed that we were approaching the arctic regions, by the character of the numberless sea-fowl which at times surrounded us. We were now, I believe, in latitude  $54^{\circ}$  or  $55^{\circ}$  ; but I am uncertain, from the reasons I before stated.

The weather now altered for the worse. Sleet, fog, and rain succeeded each other with unvarying rapidity, with an addition generally of a strong gale, coming from the north round to the north-west. For two days it was impossible to lay our course, so we remained hove to, hoping for an abatement of the storm.

I am now coming to one of the most perilous incidents of my life. Thompson, O'Connor, Stokes, and I were in the same watch, though we were stationed in different parts of the ship. It had been blowing very hard from the northward during the day ; but towards the evening it moderated a little, and the ship was carrying her three whole topsails close-hauled, and looking up to the north-east. No moon or stars were visible, for heavy masses of clouds covered the sky, and seemed to descend till they filled, as it were, the whole space between sky and ocean.

There were look-outs stationed forward, though, as we were supposed to be in the open sea, no danger of any sort was apprehended. Other ships might, by possibility, be crossing our course, but that was not likely ; and if, by any wonderful chance, we came near each other, we should probably see and be seen in time to prevent a collision. The larboard watch, to which I belonged, and of which Mr. Dunning, the second lieutenant, was officer, had the first watch, namely, from eight o'clock till midnight. At four bells, or ten o'clock, it came to my turn to take my trick at the helm. The weather had become



bitterly cold ; so, I, with the rest, had donned all the warm clothing I could command.

To say that the night was very dark would not give an idea of the inky obscurity in which we appeared to be sailing. One could scarcely see one's hand with one's arm held out at full length ; and as for discerning anything ahead, that appeared impossible. I say appeared, because there is much difference having something to look at and nothing. In the latter case you fancy, because you see nothing, that nothing could be seen if it was there. I heard Mr. Dunning, as he passed me, apostrophising the night as dark as Erebus.

I had just been relieved, and was finding my way forward, knocking my hands against my sides to warm them, when there was a loud cry from the look-out man of "A ship ahead, standing right for us under all sail."

"Under all sail—impossible, in a night like this!" exclaimed the officer of the watch, rousing himself from a reverie.

"Luff all you can luff, and we may weather her," cried the voice from forward, in a tone which showed the emergency of the case ; but the lieutenant had seen what he thought was a sail, and exclaimed, "Keep her away—hard up with the helm—hard up." The commands of the officer were obeyed ; the spokes of the wheel were turned a-weather ; the ship, falling off, felt the full force of the gale, and flew with redoubled speed through the water.

Andrew Thompson, who was standing next to me, had been peering into the gloom ahead. "A sail!" he exclaimed, "that's no sail, but an iceberg—I see its light. We might have weathered it ; but now we are on it—and Heaven have mercy on our souls!"

As he spoke, a loud, fearful crash was heard—the stout ship shook and trembled in every timber. I was thrown, as were all near me, to the deck with stunning force. Shrieks and cries arose from every part of the ship ; and the watch below, in their consternation, came hurrying up on deck, many without their clothes, others with them in their hands. All was dismay and confusion ; while the terrific noise of the wind and the sea dashing over the ship, and the ship striking against the iceberg (for an iceberg it was in truth against which we had struck), added



to the cries of the people, the groans of the ship, and the creaking and crashing of the masts, almost drowned the voices of the officers, who were rushing here and there as they came from their cabins, in a vain endeavour to restore order. Many of the hands in their fright sprang overboard, and were instantly swallowed up by the waves. The ship rose and fell with tremendous force as the sea lifted her, and the loud crashing forward showed that her strong bows had been stove in. The fore-mast went by the board, the heel probably lifted right out of its step. Then a terrific cry arose that the ship was sinking, and that all was lost.

The sergeant of marines, a rigid disciplinarian, had at the first alarm collected his men, and by the command of the captain brought them, with their arms in their hands, on the quarter deck, ready to enforce his orders. No sooner was the cry raised that all was lost, than many rushed forward, with the intention of getting on the iceberg.

"Let no man quit the ship!" shouted the captain through his speaking-trumpet. "Beat to quarters, marines; fire on any who attempt to leave the deck!"

Andrew Thompson, O'Connor, and Stokes were close to me, just abreast of the fore-mast. Andrew looked round when he heard the bows of the ship being stove in. "My lads," he exclaimed to us three, "the ship won't be many minutes more above water; so if you'd have a chance for your lives, follow me!"

This he said just as the captain had ordered the marines to fire on any who should quit the ship. We did not stop to see whether they would obey or not, but, jumping on the fore-castle, ran along the bowsprit and down by the dolphin-striker—a spar which hangs perpendicularly under the bowsprit—from whence we dropped down one by one on to a part of the iceberg which the waves did not reach. The ice was very rough, and we were thus enabled to scramble up perfectly clear of the sea.

Several others attempted to follow our example; and the marines, even at that awful moment, obedient to their orders, commenced firing on them. By the flashes of their muskets, as well as from three or four guns, which the gunner and his crew had time to discharge, the whole dreadful scene was disclosed for an instant,



never to be erased from my memory. The ship, with her bow run high upon the berg—her tall masts, with their yards and sails going by the board—the dark ocean and the white-crested seas dashing over her stern, amid which stood a mass of human beings, in all the attitudes of agonised despair and dismay, except those few drilled to obedience, who knew not the danger. Then, again, above our heads, rising to the clouds, the white shining iceberg, which at every flash seemed to glow with flames of fire—the bright light reflected from pinnacle to pinnacle, and far into the caverned recesses of its stupendous sides.

Can I ever forget the dreadful despairing shriek which rent the skies, as the bow lifting high in the air, it seemed, the stern sank down, even at the instant the marines fired their last volley : it was a volley over their own graves ! Slowly the proud ship glided from the icy rock, on which she had been wrecked, down into the far depths of the ocean. Soon all were engulfed beneath the greedy waves. No helping hand could we offer to any of our ship-mates. The taller masts and spars followed, dragged down by the sinking hull ; and in another instant, as we gazed where our ship had just been, a black obscurity was alone before us. I say we, for I saw that others were near me ; but who they were I could not at the time tell. I called out, and Andrew's voice answered, " Is that you, Peter ? I am glad you've escaped, lad. Who is there besides ? "

" I'm here, Andrew, thanks to Providence and your advice," cried Terence.

" And so am I ; but I don't think I can hold on much longer," exclaimed poor Tom Stokes, who had fallen on his side and hurt himself. Terence and I who were near him, grasped hold of him, and dragged him up to the broad ledge on which we were seated, from the rough points of ice to which he had been clinging. We then all huddled together as close as we could, to keep ourselves warm.

" Perhaps there may be someone else saved," observed Andrew ; so we shouted at the top of our voices, " Ship-mates, ahoy ! are any of you there ? " We listened. The only answering sound was the lashing of the waves against the base of the iceberg ; and we were convinced that, out of that gallant crew, who lately trod the deck of the beautiful ship which was now fathoms down beneath our feet, we four were the only beings left alive.



## CHAPTER XX

I CAN scarcely picture the horrors of that night. I would fain, indeed, forget them, but that is impossible. We had preserved our lives for the present moment ; but what could we expect beyond, but starvation in its worst form ? We had also read and heard enough of icebergs to know that, as they are driven to the southern altitudes, their bases, immersed in water much above the freezing-point, rapidly melt, and huge fragments being dislodged, they are suddenly reversed, creating a tumult as if a huge mountain were plunged into the ocean.

We had many hours to wait for daylight. We were so well clothed, from its having been our watch on deck, that we did not feel the cold particularly ; but poor Tom continued to suffer. Fortunately Andrew discovered in his pocket his pipe with some tobacco, and a flint and steel. He lighted the pipe, and let Tom have a smoke, which revived and warmed him, and we then all took a few whiffs round. This little luxury seemed to do us much good. We sheltered Tom as much as we could from the wind with our bodies ; and we wrung out his wet jacket, and chafed his hands and feet till the circulation was restored. The night, however, seemed interminable. To favour us still further, the wind fell, and shifted farther to the south, which made it much warmer. The sea also went down, for it did not seem to lash our floating resting-place with such fury as before.

Morning at last dawned ; and what a change from the previous day ! Then all had been storm and gloom ; now all around was calm, beautiful, and bright. Before the sun rose, the whole eastern sky was glowing with an orange tinge ; while every fleecy cloud around was tinted with gold and red, orange, or pink, and every conceivable intermediate hue ; while the clear portions of the sky itself were of the purest and most ethereal blue—the whole sea glowing with the same varied and beautiful colours. But still more beautiful and wonderful seemed the vast mountain of ice on which we floated, as in every fantastic form it appeared, towering above us.

It is not to be wondered at, if we did not admire the enchanting spectacle as much as it deserved, for we could not forget that we were floating on an iceberg, in the



middle of the North Sea ; but still the scene made an impression on my mind which I shall not forget. We had struck on the lowest and most precipitous side of the iceberg, there being a wide flat space some distance above the water, with one ledge rising above the other, for some way up, so that we had ample room to walk about ; nor was the ice so slippery as to cause us much fear of tumbling into the water. I had heard a rippling noise during the night, and could not conceive whence it came ; but now, on looking around, I perceived that it was caused by a small cascade, which, from the ice at the top continually melting, came trickling down the side.

"We shall have fresh water, at all events, in abundance," I observed to Andrew, who had awakened from a sleep into which he, with our other companions, had fallen.

"Yes, Peter ; and from what I see not far off, if I mistake not, we shall have food also," he added, pointing to a dark object which lay on a ledge below us, a little way to the left.

"It looks like an animal of some sort," I exclaimed. "But I am afraid it will be off before we can catch it. Shall we run down and secure it ?"

"I have no fear on that score," he replied ; "it is a seal, and from the way it is lying, it is, I suspect, dead. Indeed, a live animal would not have got on the ice so early in the morning. They are now feeding, and love to come out of the water to bask at noon in the sun. We will wake up Terence and Tom, and get them to help to drag it up out of the reach of the sea. It will probably not be very palatable, though it will doubtless serve to keep us alive."

We roused up our companions ; then, with care to avoid falling into the sea, descended to where the body of the seal had been thrown. The animal was dead, but it was quite fresh, and had probably been cast up that very night ; at all events, it could not have been there long.

We found that we could not drag the entire body of the seal up to the higher ledge, so we cut thin slices out of it, hoping by drying them in the sun to preserve them longer. We first skinned it carefully, as Andrew showed us that by stretching out the skin it would afford us some little shelter at night. Having collected a supply of food to last



us for many days, we dragged the remainder of the carcase out of the reach of the waves, and carried the meat to the upper ledge.

"Now, my lads," said Andrew, who took the lead in everything, we willingly obeying him, "it is very right to secure some food for ourselves in the first place; but as we shall none of us have a fancy for spending the rest of our days here, we'll look out to see if there's a ship in the offing, and if so, to make some signal to attract her notice."

We all agreed; and before attempting to eat some of the seal, for which, indeed, we had little fancy, we set to work to climb to one of the highest pinnacles of the berg. We found it impossible to reach the highest, but we got some way up; and not a sail was to be seen as far as the eye could reach on the part of the horizon visible to us. Our climb had shown us, however, a considerable portion of the lower part of the berg, and we observed several things lying about, evidently cast there by the waves. We immediately descended to secure them.

There was a hen-coop with some chickens in it, and though they were drowned, they were very acceptable; there were two boarding pikes, a boat-sail, and several spars and bits of rope, which had been lying in the boats or on the booms. These were all treasures, and, collecting them, we carried them up to our ledge. There were also fragments of wood and chips washed from the cook's galley, and bits of the quarter-boat which had gone to pieces with the first sea. These latter we dried in the sun, and afterwards kindled with them a small fire, over which we cooked two of our fowls, and dried the seal's flesh for future use. We without difficulty ate the fowls, but had not yet got up an appetite for seal flesh.

"We might be worse off, there's no doubt about it," observed Terence; "and it strikes me, Andrew, that what with the hen coop and the spars we might build a sort of a raft which would keep us afloat a short time, should the berg take to making a somersault."

"I was thinking of the same thing," was Andrew's reply. "They will form but a small raft; but if the berg drives anywhere near shore, it will, at least, enable us to reach it. The sooner we set about making it the better. It will keep us off the cold ice in the meantime, and by rigging the boat's sail on the pikes, we shall be sheltered



from the wind ; and, my lads, let me tell you, we might be much worse off, so let us be thankful."

This conversation took place while we were making our breakfast. Instead of tea, we knocked off, with the boarding-pikes, lumps of ice, which we ate, and found perfectly fresh. This, Andrew explained, arose either from the iceberg having been formed of the accumulation of the snow of many winters on the coast of Greenland, and thus having been always fresh ; or if formed out of salt water, from the ice, when freezing, having ejected the saline particles. He told us that water, when freezing, has the property of purifying itself, and of squeezing out, as it were, all extraneous or coarse matter.

Our not over luxurious repast being finished, Andrew proposed our attempting again to ascend the berg to plant a signal-post and flag to attract the notice of any passing ship. Terence was for spreading out the boat's sail ; but Andrew reminded him that on the white iceberg that would not be readily seen, and advised our fastening our coloured handkerchiefs together instead.

"We must first, however, get to the top of the berg," said Terence ; "and, to my mind, these boarding-pikes will serve us a good turn."

No sooner thought of than tried. With the boarding-pikes we chopped steps out of the side, where it was too precipitous to surmount without such aid ; and by fixing the pikes below us, we shoved ourselves up with them. In this manner, after considerable labour, we reached a high pinnacle of the berg. It was not broad enough for us to stand on without fear of falling off, so we sat astride on it while we chopped a hole deep enough to fix one of the spars in, which we had hauled up for the purpose. At the top we secured four red cotton handkerchiefs, which, as they blew out, might be seen at a considerable distance. We beat the ice tightly round the heel of the spar, and it appeared to stand firmly and well.

"Now, on whatever side of the berg a ship approaches, it will be seen that some human beings are on it," observed Andrew, as we prepared to descend, having first carefully surveyed the horizon on every side.

At this juncture, we had a loss, which caused us great dismay, and, we thought, would prove a very serious inconvenience. After lighting the fire, Andrew had put



the flint and steel into his jacket pocket, along with his handkerchief, on drawing out which they were jerked out also, and before we could catch them, they had fallen over the steep side of the berg. Away they bounded, from ledge to ledge, till they fell into the sea. Had they lodged in any crevice, one of us might probably have attempted to recover them, and should very likely have fallen into the sea in so doing; so, as Andrew observed, all was for the best. It was fortunate, we observed that we had dried some of our seal's flesh, or we should have had to eat it quite raw.

We now descended, and commenced at once to form our raft. We had few materials, and our only tools were the knives, and the heads of the boarding pikes. We first made a framework of the spars; and then, knocking the hen coop to pieces, we nailed the planks on to the top, securing the whole fabric more firmly with ropes. When completed, as we looked at it, we agreed that it was a very small ark to support four people on the stormy ocean.

"I don't think it will have to float me, shipmates," said poor Tom, who had not recovered his hurt. "I feel as if I could not weather out another night like the last."

"Oh, you'll do well enough, lad," answered Andrew, in a kind voice. "Your clothes will be dry, you'll have a dry plank to lie on, and a roof over your head. You'll do yet, trust to me." These encouraging words had an immediate effect on Tom's spirits, and we heard no more of his complaints.

We had observed, as we sat on the top of the berg, several articles floating round the base, and some lodged in crevices which we had not before discovered. Our raft being completed as far as our materials would go, I volunteered to try and get hold of some of the things. To do this with safety, I begged my shipmates to hold one end of a line, which we had formed out of the various pieces collected, while the other I secured round my body. By keeping the line always tight, I was able to lean over the edge and pick up several things in the water. The first was a bucket, in sound condition. This was valuable, as it would contain fresh water, and prevent the necessity of our chewing the cold ice, which chilled us extremely. Then I found some more spars, and the



fragments of one of the boats, which must have been stove in and got adrift before the ship went down. These enabled us to increase our raft to a size which afforded us hope that it might support us in our necessity.

When I was tired, Terence followed my example, and also added to our store of valuables. As he was hunting about, almost out of sight, among the rougher parts of the berg, we heard him sing out, "A prize! a prize!" and, standing up, he held aloft an iron pot with the cover on. The cover had been jammed tightly down, so that it floated like a buoy.

"There is something in it, though," he observed, shaking it; and, on getting off the cover, we discovered a piece of beef ready for cooking. It had evidently floated out of the cook's galley.

"I quite forgot, though, that we had no means of lighting a fire; so, after all, it won't be of any use," sighed Terence, after we had all four collected again on our raft.

"Don't be so sure of that," said Andrew. "I have seen a fire kindled by means which few people would think of, but I am not quite certain that I can manage it; however, I'll try. It's worth the experiment; for if we can light a fire, we can make some soup, which will do us all good."

Saying this, he climbed some way up the berg, where he knocked off a pure piece of ice from one of its sparkling pinnacles. We all sat round, wondering what he was going to do. With the boarding-pike he carefully chopped the lump, till he had made it into a thick circular cake; then he pared away the edges, and afterwards commenced operations with his knife, scraping away, till he had formed both sides into a perfect convex shape. Lastly, he took it between his mittens, and rubbed it round and round till he turned it out with a fine polish.

"There," he said, "there is a fine burning-glass for you."

"A burning glass!" I answered, laughing. "A piece of ice shaped like a burning-glass; but you will never get anything like fire out of that, I should think."

"I should think not," said Terence, but not in the same positive way that I had spoken; for he had, justly, a great respect for everything Andrew did.

"Give me your hand here, then," said Andrew to me.



I took off my mitten and gave it him willingly. He looked at the sun, which was shining brilliantly, and held the ice between it and my hand. I saw a little bright spot appear on my hand ; but I thought nothing of that, till, feeling an acute sensation of burning, I snatched my hand away in a hurry, to the amusement of my companions.

"I thought it would answer," exclaimed Andrew triumphantly. "I saw the master of a whaler I was once on board make several like this, and play the same trick to his people I played you ; and he afterwards explained that any perfectly transparent substance in a convex shape—that is, bulging out like this—will collect the rays of the sun, and form a burning glass. But now, while the sun is out, and before our burning-glass melts, let us light a fire and boil our soup."

The chips we had collected very rapidly dried ; so we soon had a fire kindled by this unexpected means. The soup refreshed us wonderfully ; but we were very sparing of it, by Andrew's advice ; for we could not tell how long we might have to remain without means of obtaining more food.

Thus passed away our first day on the iceberg, without a sail reappearing on the horizon to afford us a hope of rescue.

## CHAPTER XXI

THAT night, overcome by fatigue, strange as it may seem, we all slept soundly. The sun again rose, and discovered us still floating in safety on our unstable resting-place. The day passed much as the former one had done.

We had been actively employed during the greater part of it, and therefore, in spite of our extraordinary position and the deep anxiety we felt for our future fate, we were all able to sleep, if not very soundly, at least for some hours, when the third night closed in upon us.

How long I had slept I do not know, when I was awakened by a loud noise and a violent movement of the iceberg.

Andrew suddenly started up, exclaiming, "The time has come ! Hold on to the raft, my lads ; hold on."

He meantime seized a boarding-pike, ready to steady



the raft. His impression was that the iceberg was in the act of rolling over, and that now was the time our raft would be of service, if it could survive the waves caused by the submersion of the snow-formed mountain on which we rested.

We waited in awful suspense, believing that our last moment had indeed arrived. It is difficult to calculate time on such occasions. Gradually the rocking movement of the berg ceased, and we found that the ledge on which we were posted had sloped rather more towards the water than before, so that it was necessary to continue holding on by the boarding-pike to prevent our gliding off.

"What has happened?" I exclaimed, as I first again drew breath freely. "I thought it was all over with us."

"So did I, lad, at first, before I had time to think. I now suspect the cause of the commotion; and it is a mercy that the consequences have not been more terrible. When the circumstance which has just taken place happens, the whalers say that an iceberg has calved—that is, a huge lump of ice has broken away from the base of the berg, and has floated up to the top of the water. The noise we heard was when it struck against other parts, and first came to the surface. The loss of a large mass, of course, makes the berg lop-sided; and should another lump break away, it may go right over. Should we survive till the morning, we shall probably see the calf floating near us."

It may be supposed that we did not sleep, nor attempt to sleep, any more that night. As there was no moon, we had not any means of ascertaining how the time passed; but we calculated that it was about two o'clock in the morning. Oh, how long that night seemed! I fancied that it would never have an end: each minute seemed prolonged to an hour—each hour to a winter's night. Sometimes we talked, and listened to Andrew's description of the events which had occurred to him when he before visited the Polar Sea. At other times we were all silent together; but Andrew took care this should not last long; and never did man so exert himself to keep up the spirits of his companions.

With no little thankfulness did we welcome the first streaks of dawn on the eastern horizon. We had scarcely risen to our feet when a shout of joy escaped from our











lips ; for there, in the gray misty dawn, with her canvas hanging against her masts, lay motionless on the calm water a ship. How our hearts beat with hope and fear ! My first impulse was to scream out to her. I checked myself, and asked Andrew what he would advise. He did not answer for some time.

Eagerly we watched the stranger. We could scarcely breathe—we could scarcely speak. All our thoughts were concentrated in that one point : our very being seemed wrapped up, as it were, in it. The night had passed slowly away ; but still more slowly did the light of day seem to creep over the world.

At last Andrew answered my question by saying, " The first thing we must do, shipmates, is to climb up to the top of the berg, and spread out our red handkerchiefs, so as to show a broad face to those on board yonder vessel. As soon as the sun is high enough, we'll try and light a fire, and the smoke may be seen by them ; but if not, then we must trust ourselves to the raft, and try to paddle up to her. Perhaps we may reach her before a breeze springs up ; but perhaps not. Yet I don't think it will get up till noon."

" But why not get on the raft at once ? " I urged ; for I had more confidence in it than he had.

" Because if we do, we may not be able to return to the iceberg, which we should wish to do if we miss the ship," he answered. " But on that point I will agree to what you all wish. What do you say, Tom ? you are the youngest, and should speak first."

" I say, then, let us try the raft," said Tom, who fancied even that he could swim to the ship.

" And so do I," I added.

" And I," exclaimed Terence eagerly. " We'll drive her up to the ship in no time."

" Then, shipmates, the sooner we are off the better," we all cried out together.

Terence and I climbed up to the top of the berg, and spread out our handkerchiefs between two upright spars, and we thought they could not fail to be seen. Andrew and Tom, meanwhile, were filling the iron pot with water, collecting some of our seal flesh, and otherwise getting our raft ready. Securing one end of our rope to a point of ice, we eased the raft carefully down into the sea. To



our satisfaction it floated well alongside, but it required great caution not to upset it as we stepped upon it. We at once saw that Andrew had good reason for not wishing to trust to it; for no sooner were we on it, than, calm as the sea was, the water washed completely over it, and, had we not placed two planks across it to sit on, we should have been wet through directly. We each of us held a small piece of the boat's planking in our hands to serve as paddles.

"Away we go, my lads!" exclaimed Terence, as he gave a strong shove against the iceberg with a boarding-pike; and with a cheer, which, perilous as was our adventure, we could not repress, we began vigorously to ply our paddles. It was a matter of life and death, we saw. If we missed the ship, our chance of returning to the iceberg was small indeed. Our progress was very slow. We might have made a mile an hour—perhaps not so much—and we had three miles to go at least. Still we did not flag in our exertions. We each of us chewed a piece of seal's flesh to stay our hunger, though we had no inclination or power to swallow anything. We scarcely spoke a word all the time, but every now and then we turned a glance back, to judge how far we had got from our late abode.

One mile was passed, and we were not seen. Indeed, so small a speck as we were on the ocean, we could not expect to be observed till the sun had risen. Our great anxiety was respecting the wind—still the sea continued calm as a mirror. Oh we went—our eyes were on the ship's sails. Alas! a light cat's paw skimmed across the ocean—the top-gallant-sails of the barque blew out; but before they had any influence in impelling her through the water, they again drooped as before. Another cat's paw came stronger than the first, and rippled the whole surrounding surface.

Oh, with what agony we saw the topsails bulge out, and the barque's head turn from us! We simultaneously shouted, or rather shrieked out in our eagerness. It was of no avail. We strove to drive the raft on faster than before. What could our utmost efforts accomplish in overtaking a ship, her sails filled even with the light air then blowing? No longer were cat's paws playing on the surface of the sea, but a well-defined ripple, almost small



waves, were covering every part of it ; and, as we worked our way among them, they washed around our feet. Every sail on board the barque began to draw ; she had got steerage-way and was standing from us. We were not seen ; and hope, which had hitherto sustained us, fled. Our hearts sank, and scarcely could we longer ply our useless paddles.

“ Andrew, what say you to this ? ” asked Terence at length.

“ Persevere to the last, like men,” replied Andrew. “ We may have to return to the iceberg ; but even then we must not lose courage, or our trust in Providence.”

Just then the sun rose from his watery bed with glorious refulgence in an unclouded sky. I looked back, to judge how far we had got from the iceberg. Truly if it had appeared beautiful when we were on it, doubly so did it appear now, glittering in the beams of the sun ; some parts of alabaster whiteness, and the rest tinged with hues of gold and pink and most transparent blue. It was an object well calculated to attract the eyes of a stranger.

A cry from my companions made me turn my head. The barque's sails were shivering, as she luffed up to the wind. Directly after, a boat was seen to be lowered, and quickly being manned, it pulled towards us. Then indeed our hearts rose to our bosoms, and we shouted with joy. Poor Tom, from the great revulsion of feeling, was nearly fainting and falling off the raft, had we not supported him. Still we paddled on, and the boat seemed to fly towards us. She was quite close to us, when, in our joy, we waved our paddles above our heads, and gave way to another shout.

“ Hallo, who have we here ? ” exclaimed a voice from the boat. “ What, mates, we didn't see you ! ”

Such was the case ; they had seen our signal, but had overlooked us. The surgeon of the ship, never having before seen an iceberg, was gazing at it with his glass, and was the first to remark our handkerchiefs ; and not being able to make out what they were, he had directed to them the captain's attention. He was in the boat, and assisted to help us off our raft.

Once on board and safe, the strength which had hitherto supported us, gave way, and we sank down to the bottom of the boat, overpowered with various emotions. I trust



and believe that we were all of us grateful to Heaven for our wonderful preservation.

The boat towed our raft alongside, as it was too valuable for firewood to be lost. We were hoisted on board, unable to help ourselves, and received by the master, officers, and crew with the greatest kindness and attention. The surgeon ordered us at once to be put into warm hammocks, while some warm liquid was poured down our throats, which soon restored us. However, no one questioned us about our adventures till we were more completely recovered.

Two events occurred which ought to have increased, if they did not, our sense of gratitude for our preservation. Scarcely had our feet touched the deck of the barque than a strong breeze sprang up, which sent her at the rate of some seven knots an hour through the water, far away from the iceberg. Before, however, she had run out of sight of that floating island, its glittering summits were seen to lean forward, and, with a sound which could be heard at that distance, to fall prostrate in the water, while the waves created by its submersion reached so far as perceptibly to lift the ship as they passed. Thus was I, with my companions, preserved from the most awful and perilous position in which I was ever placed.

## CHAPTER XXII

THE vessel on board which we so happily found ourselves was called the *Shetland Maid*—her master, Captain John Rendall. She measured three hundred and fifty tons, was barque-rigged, and perfectly fitted as a whaler, being also strengthened by every means which science could devise, to enable her to resist the pressure of the ice to which such vessels must inevitable be exposed in their progress through the Arctic seas. She had forty-two souls on board, including officers, being some few short of her complement, as two fell sick in Orkney before leaving, and two were unhappily lost overboard in a furious gale she encountered soon after sailing.

Andrew, Terence, and I remained two days below under the doctor's care, and by the third had completely recovered our usual strength. Tom Stokes, who had



suffered most, and was not naturally so strong, took a week before he came round.

As soon as we appeared on deck, the captain called us aft, and desired to know our adventures. Andrew was the spokesman, and the captain expressed himself much pleased with our messmate's mode of narrating them.

"Well, my men," he said, "I have lost some of my crew, and I suppose you'll have no objection to entering regularly for the voyage in their place. You'll share with the other able seamen eighteen-pence for each tun of oil, you know, besides monthly wages."

We told him that we should be glad to enter, and would sign articles when he pleased; and that we would answer for Tom Stokes, that he would do the same. Behold me at last, then, as I have styled myself, PETER THE WHALER. We were now standing to the northward, and rapidly approaching the ice.

A whaler, in order to withstand the shock of the ice, is strengthened inside, both at the stem and stern, by stout timbers placed in various directions, and fastened securely together; while on the outside she is in parts covered with a double, and even a treble planking, besides other thick pieces, which serve to ward off the blows from the parts most likely to receive them. How little all the strengthening which the art and ingenuity of man can devise is of avail against the mighty power of the ice, I shall have hereafter to describe. The masts of a whaler are lower than in a common merchantman, and her sails are smaller, and cut in a different shape, the courses or lower sails decreasing towards the foot, so as to be worked with slight strength. Sometimes this is of importance as, when all the boats are away together in chase of whales, three or four men alone remain on board to take care of the ship.

Our ship made good progress towards the fishing grounds in the north, to which she was bound. Sometimes we had a clear sea; at other times we were sailing among patches of ice and icebergs, or through lanes penetrating into packs of many miles in extent, and from which it seemed impossible we should ever again be extricated. Our captain, or one of his mates, was always at this time at the crow's nest, directing the course of the ship amid the dangers which surrounded her.



For several days, during which we captured two whales, we were cruising about, in the hopes of finding a passage through the ice. We were now joined by a squadron of six other ships all bent on the same object that we were, to find our way across Baffin's Bay to a spot called Pond's Bay, which has been found to be frequented by a large number of whales.

I must mention the great length of the days ; indeed, for some time past there had scarcely been any night. Now, for the first time in my life, I saw the sun set and rise at midnight. It was my first watch ; and, as eight bells were struck, the sun, floating majestically on the horizon, began again its upward course through the sky. On the other side the whole sky was tinged with a rich pink glow, while the sky above was of a deep clear blue. I could scarcely tear myself from the spectacle, till old David laughed heartily at me for remaining on deck when it was my watch below. Now was the time to push onward, if we could once penetrate the ice.

We were now approaching the most dangerous part of our voyage, the passage across Melville Bay, which may be considered the north-eastern corner of Baffin's Bay. Ships may be sailing among open ice, when, a south-westerly wind springing up, it may suddenly be pressed down upon them with irresistible force, and they may be nipped or totally destroyed.

For a week we threaded our way among the open floes, when a solid field seemed to stop our further progress.

The ice-saws were accordingly ordered to be got ready, with a party to work them, on the ice. I was one of them ; and, while we cut the canal, the ship was warped up, ready to enter the space we formed.

The ice-saw is a very long iron saw, and has a weight attached to the lower end. A triangle of spars is formed, with a block in the centre, through which a rope, attached to the upper part of the saw, is rove. The slack end of the rope is held by a party of men. When they run away from the triangle, the saw rises, and when they slack the rope, the weight draws it down, as the sawyer in a saw pit would do. As the saw performs its work, the triangles are moved from the edge of the ice. As the pieces were cut, they were towed away and shoved along to the mouth of the canal.

All the time we were at work, some of the men with



good voices led a song, in the chorus of which we all joined ; and I must say we worked away with a will. It was harder work when we had to haul out the bits of ice, the ship being towed into the canal. With a cheerful shout we completed our canal, and got the ships into a natural lane ; and the rest following close upon our track, we worked our way along for many miles, by what is called tracking.

This operation is very similar to the way a canal-boat is dragged along a canal through the green fields of England, only that men have, in the case I am describing, to do the work of horses. A tow-rope was made fast to the fore-mast, and about a third of each ship's company were ordered to drag their respective ship ahead. Away we went, as usual with song and laughter, tramping along the ice for miles together, and towing our homes, like snails, after us.

For several days we continued the same work ; and afterwards, when we got out of the lanes, and the ice was found broken, or so irregular that it was impossible to walk over it, we had to carry our ice-claws, or what may be called ice-kedges, to warp the ship ahead. The ice-claws grappled hold of the ice, and the warp being then carried round the capstan, or windlass, we hove in on it, just as if we were heaving up an anchor, only that this work continued for hour after hour, and days and nights in succession, without intermission.

Ten days passed away much in the manner I have described. We then got into comparatively clear water for a few hours, during which time the other ships joined us. As there was no wind we had to tow the ship ahead in the boats, so that there was no cessation of our labours.

"Well," I exclaimed to old David M'Gee, a hardened whaler, "I suppose after all this we shall soon get into an open sea again."

"Don't be too sure of that, or of anything else, lad," he answered. "We have not yet got into the thick of it, let me tell you."

I found that his words were too true. The boats had been hoisted in, for a breeze had sprung up, and we were progressing favourably, when we came to some large floes. The openings between them were wide, and without hesitation we proceeded through them. On a sudden



these vast masses were seen in motion, slowly moving round and round, without any apparent cause. The captain hailed from the crow's nest, ordering the ice-saws to be got ready, and the ship to be steered towards one of the largest floes close on the larboard-bow. The sails were clewed up, and the ice-claws being carried out, the ship was hauled close up to it ; and while the captain and carpenters were measuring out a dock, a party, of which I was one, set to work with the saws.

There was no time to be lost. A moment too late, and our stout ship might be cracked like a walnut, and we might all be cast homeless on the bleak expanse of ice to perish miserably. The floes were approaching rapidly, grinding and crushing against one another, now overlapping each other ; or, like wild horses fighting desperately, rearing up against each other, and with terrific roar breaking into huge fragments.

"Bear a hand, my lads ; bear a hand, that's good fellows. We'll not be nipped this time if we can help it," sang out the officers in a cheering tone to encourage us, though the anxious looks they cast towards the approaching masses showed that their confidence was more assumed than real.

Whatever we thought, we worked and sang away as if we were engaged in one of the ordinary occupations of life, and that, though we were in a hurry, there was no danger to be apprehended. The dock was cut longwise into the ice, the length of the ship, which was to be hauled in stern first. As there was every appearance of a heavy pressure, the ice at the inner part of the dock was cut into diamond-shaped pieces, so that, when the approaching floe should press on the bows, the vessel might sustain the pressure with greater ease, by either driving the pieces on to the ice, or rising over them.

The crews of all the other ships were engaged in the same way, but, as may be supposed, we had little time to attend to them. Our captain was engaged in superintending our operations ; but I saw him cast many an anxious glance towards our advancing foes.

For an instant, he ran to the side of the ship and hailed the deck. "Mr. Todd," he said, "it will be as well to get some casks of provisions, the men's clothes, and a few spare sails for tents, and such-like things, you know, ready



on deck, in case the nip should come before we can get into dock."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the mate, not a bit disconcerted; and with the few hands remaining on board he set about obeying our commander's somewhat ominous directions.

I ought to have said that the rudder had at the first been unshipped and slung across the stern, as it stands to reason that when pressed against by the ice it should be the first thing injured. Still we worked away. We had begun to saw the loose pieces at the head of the dock.

"Hurry, my lads! knock off, and bear a hand to haul her in," shouted out the captain; "no time to be lost!"

With a right good will we laid hold of the warps, and towing and bending off the ship's bows from the outer edge of the ice, we got her safely into the dock. We then set to work to cut up the pieces. We completed our labours not a moment too soon; for before we had got on board again, the tumult, which had long been raging in the distance, came with increased fury around us, and we had reason to be grateful to Heaven that we were placed in a situation of comparative safety.

## CHAPTER XXIII

WE were safe—so the old hands said; but it required some time before one could fully persuade one's self of the fact. Not only were the neighbouring floes in motion, but even the one in which we were fixed. Rushing together with irresistible force, they were crushing and grinding in every direction, with a noise far more terrific than that of thunder.

The ship meantime, notwithstanding all our precautions, was driven back before the force opposed to her; and had it not been for the loose pieces under her stern, she might have been nipped in the most dangerous manner. One might fancy that the floes were pitted to try their strength against each other, though it would have been difficult to decide which was the victor.

Then the field began to tremble, and slowly rise, and then to rend and rift with a sullen roar, and mighty blocks were hove up, one upon another, till a rampart,



bristling with huge fragments, was formed close around the ship, threatening her with destruction. It seemed like the work of magic ; for where lately there was a wide expanse of ice, intersected with lanes of clear water, there was now a country, as it were, covered with hills and rocks, rising in every fantastic shape, and valleys full of stones scattered in every direction. For a whole week we were beset, and some of the green hands began to fancy that we should be blocked up for the winter ; but the old ones knew better.

Every day the surface of the ice, where the nip had taken place, was examined with anxious eyes, in the hopes that some sign of its taking off or breaking up might be given. At length the pressure became less, the sound under the ice shrill and sharp, instead of the sullen roar which had before been heard ; the fragments which had been cast above others began to glide down and disappear in the chasms which were opening around, and water was seen in a long thin line extending to the northward.

A lane was formed, with a wall of fragments on either side ; the lane widened, the fragments rushed into the water, and the captain, from the crow's-nest, ordered the ship to be towed out of dock. The order was cheering to our hearts ; and as we had plenty of hands, it was soon executed. All sail was made, and away we flew through the passage, in a hurry to take advantage of it, lest it should again close upon us. We succeeded in getting clear, and soon after were joined by our consorts which had escaped the nip.

We made the land again to the northward of Cape York, and, when close in, were completely becalmed. The boats of each ship were ordered ahead to tow ; and thus we slowly progressed along one of the most picturesque scenes it has ever been my fortune to witness in the arctic regions. The water was of glassy smoothness, the sky of brightest blue, and the atmosphere of perfect transparency ; everywhere floated numberless icebergs of the most beautiful forms, and of dazzling hues, while all around was glancing and glittering beneath a bright and glowing sun.

On we worked our way northward. In clear weather, when a good look-out was to be had from the crow's-nest, we were able to make our way among the streams of ice ;



but in thick weather, when our course could not be marked out, we were sadly delayed.

At last, after keeping a westerly course for a few days, we broke through all intervening barriers, and once more felt our gallant ship lifting to the buoyant wave of the open sea, or rather what is called the "north water."

The ice, by the warm weather, the currents, and the northerly winds, being driven out of Lancaster Sound and the head of Baffin's Bay to the southward, leaves this part, for most of the summer, free from impediments. In five days we came off the famous fishing-station of Pond's Bay.

The whole coast, in most places, was lined with a sheet of ice some ten or fifteen miles wide, to the edge of which, in perfectly smooth water, our ship, with many others at various distances, was made fast.

Fancy a day, warm to our feelings as one at the same time of year in England, and an atmosphere of a brilliancy rarely or never seen at home, not a breath of air stirring the glassy surface of the shining ocean; while on the land side lofty mountains stretched away on either side, with the opening of the bay in the centre, the rocks of numberless tints, from the many-coloured lichens growing on them, rising as it were out of a bed of snow still filling the valleys even in midsummer; while midway, along the dark, frowning crags which formed the coast, hung a wavy line of semi-transparent mist, now tinged with a crimson hue, from the almost horizontal rays of the sun, verging towards midnight.

These objects also, it must be understood, appeared so close at hand, that I could scarcely persuade myself that an easy run across the level ice would not carry me up to them; and yet all the while they were upwards of a dozen miles off.

Most of the watch were "on the bran," that is, were in the boats stationed along the edge of the ice, on the look-out for whales. A few hands only, besides myself, were on deck, taking our fisherman's walk, with our fingers in our pockets, and the watch below were sound asleep in their berths, when Captain Rendall, as was his custom, went aloft before turning in, to take a look-out for fish from his crow's-nest. We watched him eagerly. In a few minutes he hailed the deck, with the



joyful news that at about ten miles off there was a whole run of whales, spouting away as fast as they could blow. On the instant, instead of the silence and tranquillity which had before prevailed, all was now noise, excitement, and hurry. The sleepers tumbled up from below; the harpooners got ready their gear and received their orders from the master; the boats on the bran came alongside, to have their kegs replenished with water, and their tubs with bread, beef, and pork; while the more eager mates ran aloft, to assure themselves of the best direction to take.

In a few minutes five boats were pulling out towards the run, as if the lives of a ship's company depended on our exertions. "Hurra, my lads, hurra! give way!" shouted our boat-steerers; and give way we did indeed.

Frequently, as we pulled on, we heard the loud blasts of the narwhals, or sea-unicorns, as they came towards the bay in shoals; and each time I fancied we must be close upon a whale, and that the sport was about to begin, so loud a sound did they make.

The sea-unicorn is, when full grown, from thirteen to sixteen feet long, and has a long spiral horn or tusk growing rather on one side of its upper jaw, of from eight to ten feet in length. The eyes are very small, the blow-hole is directly over them, and the head is small, blunt, and round, and the mouth cannot be opened wide. The colour, when young, is grey, with darker spots on it, and when full-grown, of a yellowish-white. It is a very inoffensive animal. It is said to use its horn for the purpose of breaking through the ice to breathe, and neither to destroy its prey nor to defend itself. It swims very fast; when struck, dives rapidly, but soon returns to the surface, and is easily killed. We passed several shoals of them on our pull, before we got up to the run, near a small floe.

"There she blows!" exclaimed our boat-steerer, almost in a whisper, so great was his eagerness and fear of disturbing the fish, as a large fish appeared close to us. We had a fine burst; the harpooner was on his feet, and, his weapon glancing from his hand, struck the monster.

Instead, however, of diving, up he rose, clear almost from the water, his head first, seeming, as his immense bulk appeared against the sky, like some giant of the deep.



We thought he was going to leap on to the floe ; but, suddenly plunging his head beneath the water, his tremendous tail was lifted above us. I thought all was over. One blow from it would have annihilated us, and dashed our boat into a thousand fragments ; but the fish, instead, dived directly down under the floe, his tail only splashing the water over us, and we were safe.

Then arose the exciting shout of "A fall, a fall !" Other boats came hurrying to our aid ; but, alas, the line on a sudden slackened, and, with a blank face, the harpooner began to haul it in.

The fish had shaken himself clear of the harpoon, and escaped. Mighty must have been the force used, for the massive iron shaft was twisted and turned as a thin piece of wire might have been bent by a turn of the hand.

But, hurra ! there are plenty more fish near ; and with a will, little disconcerted, we gave way after them. One was seen at some distance from a floe, in which there was a crack. Now it is generally known that a whale generally rises close to the nearest floe ; and if there is a crack in it, that part is selected instead of the outer edge. We got up to it before the fish appeared ; our oars were out of the water ; our harpooner standing up and watching eagerly every sign of the approach of our expected prey, guiding by signs the boat-steerer, who, with his oar, was silently impelling on the boat by sculling.

"Gently, boys—there's her eddy—two strokes more—now avast pulling !"

I could just see the head, and the large black mass of the monster's back, rising slowly from the water as he spoke, forming a strong contrast to the clear blue and white of the ice, and pure glittering sea. Then was heard the peculiar snorting blast, as she sent up in the air two watery jets ; but in an instant we were upon her.

"Harden up, my lads !" shouted the harpooner ; and a lusty stroke sent us almost on to the monster's back ; then flew forth his unerring weapon. For a few moments, but for a few only, the whale seemed prepared to die without a struggle : a convulsive quiver passed through its frame ; then, lifting up its flukes, it dived down, like its predecessor, beneath the floe. The iron had sunk in, and, raising our Blue Jack, with a loud



shout we proclaimed a fall. Out flew the line with tremendous rapidity. Now the harpooner, sitting on his thwart, attempted to check the fish by turning the line round the bollard; but so quickly did it pass through his hands, shielded by mitts, that, almost in spite of the water thrown on it, smoke ascended from the burning wood, while the bows of the boat were drawn through the underwash to the solid floe beyond.

At times we thought the boat's bow would have been drawn under the floe; again the line-manager let the line run out, and she rose once more, to be drawn down directly it was checked. But it was all-important to tire the fish, or otherwise all our line might be taken out before any assistance could come. Should this be the case, we might after all, lose the fish. First one oar was elevated, to show our need of aid; then a second, a third, and a fourth, as the line drew nearer what is called the "bitter end."

"Hold on, Darby, hold on!" we shouted in our eagerness; for we feared we might have to cut, or that the boat might be drawn under. Our shipmates tugged away at their oars with all their might, the boats from every direction dashing through the water to the point where they thought the fish might rise. Our line at the very end began to slacken—a sign that she had ceased diving. She appeared about a quarter of a mile off or more, at the edge of the floe.

The quick-sighted eye of the first mate was on her almost before she had reached the surface; and before she could again seek safety in the ocean's depths, another harpoon was plunged into her. We instantly began hauling in our lines; but before long she was off again, swimming away some depth below the surface, at a great rate, while we and the other boat were towed after her. Again the strain slackened, and she rose once more; but this time her foes were close to her. Another harpoon was struck, but it was needless. Without mercy, lances were thrust into her on every side, till the shouts which reached our ears, as we slowly approached, hauling in our lines, proclaimed that our victory was complete. The fish was now secured and made fast to a floe, while all but one boat made chase after another fish which blew temptingly near.



I ought to have said that, after securing the whale, all hands turned to with a right good will to attack the bread and meat we had with us ; for though whale-hunting beats 'hollow any other style of hunting, whether of deer, elephants, or tigers, yet it cannot by any manner of means be carried on without sustenance to the frame.

Away we went, then, the boat of the first mate leading. He, too, was successful in striking the fish. Three times she dived ; but each time one or other of her enemies were upon her with harpoon and lances, while her eddying wake was dyed with blood, and a thick pellicle of oil, which attracted crowds of persevering Mollies to feast on it, marked her course.

She at last rose close to a floe, when we all rushed in upon her. The cry of " Stern all ! " was given. Her death-flurry had come on. High up in the air she sent a stream of blood and oil, which fell thick upon us in showers of spray, and on a hummock which was near ; and the edges of the ice were dyed of a crimson tint.

The weariness which began to oppress even the strongest, told us that we had had work enough, and that a second night was approaching. With shouts of satisfaction, we now began the task of towing our prizes to the ship. It was slow and wearying work ; but every fish we took brought us nearer home, so we set cheerfully about it.

When we at last reached the ship, we found that we had been full thirty-six hours away, nearly all the time in active exertion ; and yet, from the excitement of the work, neither did we feel unusually weary, nor were we aware of the time which had passed.

I must remind my readers that this could only happen in a latitude and at a period when there is little or no difference between night and day. Our fishing was most successful, partly owing to our good fortune in meeting with the fish, but owing also much to the sagacity of our captain and his officers.

Similar scenes were occurring every day ; but though they were all nearly as exciting, and the interest of the sport was never decreased, but rather grew on us, yet, if I were to attempt to describe each chase, and how each fish was killed, my readers would weary with the account.



For the greater part of a month we remained in the bay ; and now the fish becoming scarce, and the summer drawing to a conclusion, with a fair breeze we made sail to the southward.

## CHAPTER XXIV

THE return of darkness during the night gave us notice that we were advancing towards the south, and that the short arctic summer was drawing to a close. We could no longer continue our course, hour after hour without intermission, as before, the officers relieving each other in the crow's-nest, and one watch following the other through one long-protracted day. It was impossible with any safety to proceed through that icy sea when darkness came on, and therefore each night we were obliged to make the ship fast to a floe till the return of daylight.

For about four days we had proceeded south, our course interrupted whenever we met with a whale ; and if she was killed, we made fast to a floe till we had flensed and made off. Some of the smaller whalers had got full ships, and, with joyous shouts and light hearts on board, they passed us on their way home ; and others, unwilling to wait, returned not full, so that we were nearly the last ship.

The weather continued beautifully fine, though now growing cold and chilly. We also had nearly a full ship, and were congratulating ourselves on soon being able to follow those which had preceded us ; but, till we were quite full, we could not think of doing so while the ice continued open and there was the chance of a fish. Consequently we were all on the look-out, and more eager than ever to secure our prey.

One afternoon, while we were under weigh, the cheering sound of " A fish, a fish ! see, she blows ! " from the crow's-nest, roused us all to activity. Two boats were immediately equipped and sent in chase. I was in one of them. While we were yet close to the ship, another whale was espied to the southward, at no very great distance. The prospect of getting two fish at a fall was more than could be resisted ; and, while we were killing our fish, the master made sail to come up with the other.











We were successful ; and, with less difficulty than usual, killed the whale at the edge of a floe connected with the land, towards which it had gone for shelter. The whale was killed and made fast to the floe, waiting for the return of the ship.

While we were all engaged in the chase and capture, no one had noticed the change in the weather. From a fresh breeze, sufficiently to the eastward to enable the ship to stand back towards us, it had fallen a flat calm ; the sea lay stretched out before us like a dark, shining glass, while an ominous stillness reigned through the air.

Andrew, who was line-manager in the boat to which I belonged, was the first to observe it, as we were assembled on the floe, busily engaged in hauling in the lines. He said nothing ; but I saw him look up, and, after glancing around for some moments, put his hand over his brow, and gaze earnestly forth in the direction the ship had gone. The anxious expression his countenance instantly assumed alarmed me ; and, though he at once resumed his task of coiling away the lines, I saw that all was not right. I then cast my eyes seaward, to see whereabouts the ship was. I need scarcely say that I felt a very natural alarm, when I discovered that she was almost hull down.

Andrew again looked up. The anxious expression on his face had in no way diminished ; but he was not a man to alarm or unnerve his companions by any unnecessary exclamation.

"Bear a hand, lads," he at length said. "The sooner we get in our lines, and tow the fish alongside, the better."

"I was thinking the same," said old David. "And I say the sooner the ship stands back to pick us up, the better for us. We couldn't get the fish alongside till long after dark, if she comes no nearer to us ; and how she's to do that without a breeze springs up, I don't know."

These few remarks scarcely interrupted the task in hand. When it was accomplished, however, and we had time to look round us, we all began to consider more about the difficulty of our position. I must explain that there were two boats, with a crew of five men each, so that we were ten in all. We had with us a few provisions and a cooking apparatus, with our pea-jackets to put on while waiting after our heating exercise.



The harpooners and the elder men now began to consult what was best to be done. David gave it as his opinion that the other boats had been led a long chase after a fish, and that the ship had followed thus far to the southward to pick them up, with the intention of returning immediately to us, when the calm so unexpectedly came on.

"There's no doubt about what has happened, mates ; but I want to know what those who have had experience in these seas think is about to happen," said Andrew. "There's something in the look of the sky and sea, and the feel of the air, which makes me think a change is about to take place. I therefore ask whether we shall stay by the fish, or leave her secured to the floe, and get aboard as fast as we can."

In answer to this proposal, which was certainly wise, and perfectly justifiable, several opinions were given. Some were for getting on board without delay, others were for towing the fish towards the ship, and several were for remaining by till the ship should return, though the majority were for going back in the boats alone.

A more mighty Power than ours decided what was to be done ; for, while we were still speaking, a sudden gust of wind came blowing along the edge of the ice from the northward, and throwing up the sea in so extraordinary a manner, that, had the boats been exposed to it, they could scarcely have survived. Then the wind as suddenly fell, and again all was calm as before.

"Now's 'your time, lads ; we must get on board as quick as we can !" shouted old David. While, accordingly, we were with additional care securing the whale to the floe, the sky, which was already overclouded, began to send down dense showers of snow, which so obscured the atmosphere, that the sharpest eye amongst us could no longer distinguish the ship. To attempt to get on board under these circumstances, would be more dangerous than remaining where we were ; so, putting on our Flushing jackets, we got into the boats, and drew a sail over our shoulders, to shelter ourselves as much as possible from the storm.

The snow, which had begun to fall in flakes, now changed to a powder, so dense that it appeared as if night had already come on.



"It's very dark, Andrew," I remarked; "what can be going to happen?"

"Why, I'll tell you, Peter," answered David, who heard my question. "There's going to be a harder gale of wind than we've had since you came on board; and if the old ship don't stand up to her canvas, and fetch us before night, there are few who would wish to change places with us, that's all."

I did not by any means like this announcement, for I felt that old David was not joking with me. However, our only course was to remain where we were. If the gale did come on, we were safer on the ice than on the sea; and if it passed off, the ship would not fail to come and take us on board.

For two hours we sat cramped up in the boat, and, in spite of our warm clothing, suffering not a little from the cold, which was greater than for some time past we had experienced. Suddenly the snow ceased, and with eager haste, Andrew, David, and some others jumped out of the boat and climbed to the top of the nearest hummock, from whence they could get a wider look-out than on the flat ice.

With feelings which it were vain to attempt to describe, we looked for the ship, and could nowhere see her. To the southward there was a thick mist, caused by the snow falling in that direction, and in this she was probably shrouded.

On looking to the north, we perceived in the horizon a bright luminous appearance, something like the ice-blink, but brighter, and which seemed to increase in height. David looked at it for an instant, and then shouted out, "Bear a hand, my lads, and haul up the boats—the gale is upon us!"

Suiting the action to the word, he rushed down from the hummock, accompanied by the rest of us, and we commenced hauling one of the boats up on the ice. While all hands were engaged at this work, and before it was completely accomplished, down came the gale upon us with terrific violence, almost lifting us off our legs and hurling us into the now foaming and hissing sea. The snow, which lay thick on the ice, was lifted up and blown in clouds over us; the ocean which before lay so tranquil, was now lashed into fury.



"Haul away, lads, and run the boat up," shouted Andrew, his voice scarcely heard among the tumult. We had taken out most of the things from the other boat, and, having secured the first, were about to haul her up, when a heavy sea, striking the ice, broke off a piece to which she was secured, and carried her and the harpooner belonging to her, who was standing near her, far beyond our reach. To have attempted to launch the boat to go to his rescue would have been madness. One loud, hopeless shriek was heard, and he sank for ever.

We had little time to mourn for our poor messmate—our own condition occupied all our thoughts. At the same moment that the boat was carried away, the sea broke the whale from the lashings which secured her to the ice, and without our having any power to preserve our prize, it was driven down along the edge of the floe, from which it gradually floated away.

"What's to be done now?" I asked, with several others, in a voice of despair.

"Trust in God," answered Andrew in a solemn voice. "Peter, remember we have been in a worse position before, and He saved us. He may, if He wills it, save us again."

"But how are we ever to get back to the ship, with only one boat to carry us?" asked some one.

"Captain Rendall is not a man likely to desert his people," observed David. "The ship will come back and take us off, when the gale is over—no fear of that, mates."

Notwithstanding the tone of confidence with which he spoke, I suspected that he did not feel quite as much at his ease as he pretended to be.

We had a small quantity of provisions—enough, with economy, to sustain life for a few days. We had some boats' sails, a cooking apparatus, two harpoons, spears, and two fowling-pieces, brought by the harpooners to kill a few dovekies for our messes. Several things, with a set of lines and harpoons, had been lost in the other boat.

For some time after the fatal catastrophe I have described, we stood looking out seaward, undecided what steps to take. The wrenching asunder of some huge masses of the ice, which the sea drove up close to the boat, and the violent heaving to which the whole body was subjected, showed us that we must rouse ourselves to further exertion. We had no need of consultation to judge



that we must without delay get farther away from the sea ; and, having laden our boat with all our stores, we began to work her along the ice towards the shore, which lay bleak and frowning some ten miles or so from us.

Night was now fast approaching ; and the gale, instead of abating, blew with greater fury than at first. The exertion had somewhat warmed us ; but the moment we stopped, the cold wind whistled through our clothing, and showed us that we must prepare some shelter for the night, if we would avoid being frozen to death.

Another point we also discovered was, that we required someone to take the lead, and to act as chief officer among us.

Three were first proposed, but Andrew Thompson was finally selected ; for, though he was known not to have so much practical experience as several of the others, his firmness, sagacity, and high moral character, were acknowledged by all.

"And now, my lads," he said, when he had modestly accepted the office, "the first thing we must do is to build a snow wall to shelter us from the wind ; and as soon as the wind moderates, we'll have up a flagstaff on the top of the highest hummock, to show our friends where to look for us."

According to this advice, we set to work to collect the snow, which did not lie more than three inches thick on the ice. We first made it into cakes, about four times the size of an ordinary brick, and then piled them up in a semicircular form, the convex side being turned to the wind. Over the top we spread a boat's sail, which was kept down by lumps of snow being placed on the top of it. The canvas was also allowed to hang over a couple of lances lashed together in front, so that we had a very tolerable shelter. The snow was scraped away from the interior, and such spars and planks as we could get out of the boat were spread at the bottom, with a sail over them, to form our bed. We lay down, and prepared to pass the dreary hours till the sun rose again as best we could.

We were up by dawn ; and, having laden our boat with all our stores, we commenced our toilsome journey. Our purpose was to make the land, and then to travel along over the ice till we should arrive at some valley,



or at the mouth of a river, where we might hope to find some clear water and opportunities of catching fish.

Though the land appeared quite near, it was late in the day before we reached it. What, then, was our disappointment to find not even a beach on which to build our hut for the night ! The high black cliff came completely down to the sea, and was fringed by masses of ice piled up against it, so that we could not even reach it without difficulty and danger. Our only course, therefore, was to continue along under it, till we should meet with the opening of which we were in search.

I ought to have said that we had protected the keel and bilge of our boat by securing some spars along them, so that she was able to pass over the ice without damage ; but the labour of dragging her was very great, and some even proposed leaving her behind rather than have the trouble of conveying her, till Andrew reminded them that on her might depend our only means of procuring food, and of ultimately escaping next year.

We performed a distance of nearly three miles along the shore, under the same lofty, unbroken cliffs ; and then Andrew called a halt, and we made our preparations for passing the night.

## CHAPTER XXV

FOR three days we travelled on ; and, supposing that we advanced ten miles a day, for thirty miles not a break of any description appeared in the overhanging cliffs on our right. The men had begun to grumble ; and those who had wished to proceed in the boat by water asserted that, if their advice had been followed, we should have made greater progress with less fatigue.

Andrew told them in answer that if they would but keep up their spirits, and persevere for one day longer, we should in all probability come to some opening where we might get on shore, and near which, if the sea was smooth, we might launch the boat and try to get some more fish. This encouraged them ; and the following morning, with renewed spirits, we continued on our way.

As the day drew on, there appeared but little chance of Andrew's promise being fulfilled ; for, far as the eye



could reach, was the same unbroken line of cliff. It was drawing towards sunset, when I caught sight of what appeared to me a ship thrown on her beam-ends, close under the cliff. The rest laughed at me, and telling me I must be deceived, asked me how a ship could get there.

I answered that I was certain I was not mistaken, and pointed out to them the object I had seen. It appeared to me, when I first saw it, as in a sort of shallow cavern, under the cliff; but before we could make any progress towards it, the shades of evening completely obscured it, and long before we could reach it we were obliged to encamp.

We talked a good deal about it as we sat round our lamp in our usual ice cottage; and I dreamed all night that a strange ship had appeared, and that we were to go on board in the morning.

When the morning did really come, I eagerly looked out for the first rays of light falling on the object I had seen. It was now more clear than ever. I first pointed it out to Andrew.

"Well, if that is not a real ship, those are very extraordinary marks at the foot of the cliff," he observed. "Peter, I believe you are right. It is a ship, and it may prove the means of our preservation.

Without waiting for any meal, although Andrew insisted on the boat being dragged with us, we advanced towards the supposed ship. David certainly did not believe she was one. "If that's a ship," he remarked, "I don't see how the natives would have spared her. They would have been swarming about her like bees and would have pulled her to pieces long before this."

"I still say she's a ship and that we shall see before long," I answered.

It is extraordinary how the imagination helps out the vision in a case of this sort. I believed that there was a ship, so I saw her; another man did not believe that there was a ship there, so could not perceive her.

We travelled on for three hours before all doubts were set at rest by the appearance of a large ship, thrown, as I said, on her beam-ends, but with her masts and rigging still standing. An overhanging cliff projected to the south of her, and within it was the cavern in which she lay, so



that she could only be seen from the point from which we had advanced towards her.

This providential circumstance instantly raised our spirits, and we could not help giving a loud shout of joy, as we hurried on to get on board her. Even should we find no provisions, we could not fail of obtaining numberless things which would prove of the greatest value to us.

As we got near her, her condition at once told that she had been lost amongst the ice ; and probably thrown up on to a floe by another striking her, she had drifted afterwards into her present position. For some minutes we stood round her, examining her with a feeling approaching to awe. She looked so shattered and weather-worn, and of a build so unusual, that I fancied she might have been there frozen up for centuries.

At last Terence climbed up her sides, followed by all of us. Her decks were uninjured, and were thickly covered with snow, which had contributed, I suppose, to preserve them. Her masts and lower rigging were standing, though the topmasts had gone over the side. David pronounced her to be a Dutch whaler ; and such, I believe, she was. Her hatches were on, and even the companion-hatch was drawn over, which made us think that the crew had remained on board till she was driven into her present position, and had afterwards quitted her with the intention of returning.

This opinion was confirmed when we went below. We found the cabin in good order and the furniture uninjured, for the water had not reached it. On going into the hold we discovered an abundant supply of provisions in casks ; but all her tubs were empty, which showed us that she had been wrecked on her outward voyage, before having taken a fish. Her boats also were gone, which showed the way in which her crew had escaped from her. When I first went below, I half expected to find all her people frozen to death, as I had heard of such dreadful occurrences having taken place.

Several books and papers were found in the cabin, but as none of us could read Dutch, we were unable to learn anything from them ; but Andrew and David were of opinion that she had been there five years at least, perhaps longer.

Having taken a cursory glance throughout the ship,



our appetites reminded us that we had eaten nothing that morning, so we set to work to examine the condition of the stores on board. The meat in the casks was perfectly good, and so even was the biscuit and flour, which had been preserved, I conclude, by the cold from the weevils and the rats. The only animals which had visited the ship were the bears. They had not failed to scent out the good things she contained, but not having been clever enough to lift the hatches off, they had, fortunately for us, been unable to appropriate them.

We were not long in knocking the head out of a cask, and in collecting materials to form an abundant meal, which we had not enjoyed for so many days. The cook's caboose was still uninjured on deck, and his pots and kettles were hung up inside it, with a store of coals and wood ready chopped up. We accordingly lighted a fire, and two of the men, who professed to be the best cooks, prepared our breakfast.

In the cabin we found in jars and canisters a profuse store of tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, and several sorts of preserved fruits and sweetmeats; indeed, there was an ample supply of everything we could require. The cabin was, of course, very much on one side, and moreover, very chilly; but, for the pleasure of sitting at a table, we carried our meal down there to eat it.

We then, all assembled together in the cabin, discussed on what we should do. Some were for remaining on board, and making ourselves as comfortable as we could; but Andrew at once pointed out the madness of such a proceeding. He argued that even in summer the position under the cliff was excessively cold; that the ship was in no way fitted to serve as a habitation during the winter, when there were days no person could be exposed for ten minutes together to the air without suffering; and that, although there was an abundant supply of salt provisions, unless we could procure some fresh meat, our health would materially suffer.

"My advice, mates, is," he continued, "that we travel along the coast as we first intended, till we arrive at the sort of place we were in search of when we fell in with this wreck. When we have found it, we will at once build a warm house, and then set to at hunting and fishing till the animals desert the country, and the sea is frozen over,



and the long winter nights set in. We will, however, first build some sledges, such as the natives use, and we will carry on them all the things we require from the ship to our station. If anyone had a better plan to offer, let him propose it!"

"I think Andrew's plan is the one to follow, and I propose we set about it without delay!" I exclaimed.

"And so do I," said Terence.

"And I don't see that it's a bad one," observed David.

"And I think it a good one," said Tom Stokes.

The rest offered no opposition; indeed they did not know what else to propose. I must observe that now when we had nothing to do with whaling, in which the others had more experience, Andrew fully showed his superiority and fitness to command, so that we all readily obeyed him whenever he thought fit to issue any orders. However, as he felt that he only held his authority on sufferance, he judged it best, as in the present instance, to consult all hands before the formation of any fresh plan for proceeding.

The whole day was spent on board examining the ship, and in forming our plans, and in making some of the preliminary arrangements. The first of them was to build a couple of sledges, which Andrew showed us how to do, very similar to those used by the Esquimaux. We also packed up some tea, cocoa, and sugar, as also some meat and bread to serve us for present use, till we could bring up the remainder to our winter station.

Among other valuable articles were some carpenter's tools and two fowling-pieces, some cannisters of powder, with a supply of shot, thus giving us the means of killing any game we might meet with. It was, as I said, very cold; but as there was a stove in the cabin, we lighted it, and soon got the cabin comfortably warm. Probably, had we been left to our own devices, we should have all gone to sleep without keeping any watch; but Andrew ordered some of us to keep watch by turns throughout the night, both to supply the stove with fuel and to guard against fire. Had it not been for this precaution, we might have slept away some of the valuable hours of daylight.

As soon as we had breakfasted, Andrew gave the signal for us to start. Some wanted to leave the boat



till we had found the spot we were in search of ; but he insisted on its being brought along, showing that we must have her at our station, both to enable us to catch fish and to assist us in escaping on the following summer ; and that, as she was laden and prepared for the journey, it would be wise to bring her at once.

We could only drag one sledge with us, and on that were placed a few additional stores. Having closed the hatches, we once more left the ship. We travelled on the whole of that day and the greater part of the next, without meeting with a fit place to fix on for our winter station. Some of the grumblers declared that we never should find it, and that we had much better go back to the ship.

The prospect was certainly very discouraging, and even Andrew was beginning to think that there was no help for it but to return, when, on reaching a high, black, rocky point, we saw a bay spreading far back and surrounded by hills of only moderate height, from which the snow had melted, leaving exposed a variety of grasses and lichens which clothed their sides. I shouted with joy on seeing this, to us, cheering prospect. To people under different circumstances, the view might have appeared bleak and gloomy enough.

On getting round the point, we landed on firm ground for the first time since leaving our ship ; and, strange as it may seem, I felt as if half our difficulties and dangers were over. On climbing up the nearest hill, we saw that a stream, or rather river, ran into the centre of the bay, and that from its mouth to the sea there was a clear channel. Nothing could have been more in accordance with our wishes. We might here be able to supply ourselves with fish, and from the appearance of the country there would probably be an abundance of game.

We continued along the ice till we saw, a little above the beach, a level spot on the side of the hill, well sheltered from the north. Andrew pointed it out. " There, my lads, is the place where we must build our house, and we must make up our minds to live in it for the next ten months or so at least," he observed. " We will therefore make it as comfortable as we can, for we shall not be able to shift our quarters when once the frost sets in let me tell you."



We proceeded up to the place he indicated, and under it we hauled up our boat on the beach. On a further examination of the spot, we resolved to establish ourselves there, and immediately set to work to erect a habitation which might serve us till our winter house was ready. For this purpose we collected some large stones which had been washed down from the neighbouring cliffs, and rolled them up the hill. With these as a foundation, with the addition of earth and small stones and turf, we in the course of a couple of hours had raised a wall very much in form like those we had been accustomed to form of snow. Our sail served as a roof; and in an excursion made by some of the party a short distance among the hills, a quantity of a low, shrubby plant was discovered, admirably suited for a mattress till we could get bedding from the ship.

Andrew assured us that we had every reason to be thankful that our position was so good; and so I think we had, for it most certainly might have been very much worse. But those who stay at home at ease by their warm firesides would not consider a residence in a hut on the side of a bleak hill, throughout a winter within the Arctic Circle, as a position much to be envied. Everything, we must remember, is by comparison; and I again repeat, we had good reason to be grateful.

The first thing the next morning, off we all started with the sledge, to commence the work of bringing the things from the wreck. The distance was twelve miles, so that we could at the utmost only take one trip in the day. We were all in good spirits, for we had slept soundly and had enjoyed a good meal. As we were perfectly unencumbered, we advanced at a rapid rate, and in about three hours we got up to the ship. We scrambled up the sides by the chain-plates, and were all soon on deck.

"Hallo, who left the companion-hatch open?" exclaimed Terence, who was the first who got aft. No one recollected who could have been guilty of the neglect. "No matter, there's no chance of anyone having been here while we were away," cried Terence, as he jumped down the companion-ladder.

He had not got down many steps before he sprang up again in a great hurry, with a face of terror, his head shoving back the next man who was following him, and send-



ing him sprawling on deck, while a loud, angry growl was heard issuing from the cabin.

"Och, murder!" he exclaimed; "there's Davy Jones aboard, as sure as my name's Terence O'Connor."

"Shut to the hatch there!" shouted David to some of us who were standing abaft the companion. We drew it over just in time to prevent a white head and a pair of sharp claws covered with shaggy hair from protruding out of the hatchway. At the same moment David, who had a lance in his hand thrust it down, and again a fierce, snarling growl was heard.

"Why, mates, we seem to have caught a bear," observed Andrew, who had come aft to see what had happened.

"We may have caught a dozen, for what I know," answered David. "And provided they haven't eaten up the flour, and sugar, and beef we left there, the more there are the better."

While he was speaking, he was prodding away with his spear down the companion-hatch, and the growling grew louder and fiercer.

The bear was now severely wounded, and enraged to the utmost; for in spite of the enemies he might have guessed were ready to receive him, he tried to force his way up. "Hand a gun here, and we'll see if we can't settle him," cried David; but the guns had been left leaning against a block of ice outside the ship, and before we could recover them the bear had made another attempt to get out of the trap. Evading the points of the lance, he had seized the handle in his teeth, and then climbing up the ladder, he forced the top of the hatch off with his head, and seemed about to take the deck from us. Andrew, however, had got another lance, and just as his terrific claws were close to David's shoulder, he gave him a severe wound in the neck. At the same moment I ran up with a gun, and firing into his mouth, he fell dead across the hatchway.

That he was not alone we were convinced by the appearance of another shaggy monster, who now shoved his head up to see what his companion was about. As he showed his head from under the dead body and opened his mouth to growl, David plunged his lance into it with such force that he fell mortally wounded down the ladder, carrying



the weapon with him. We had some work to drag the dead bear out of the way, he was so heavy a fellow.

"Are there any more of them?" cried Terence, who, discovering that they were mortal foes, had completely recovered from his fright. He spoke as he was peering into the cabin, and about to spring down the ladder. "Och, yes, here comes another."

And, sure enough, a third bear appeared at the doorway, with a look which seemed to ask what we wanted there. As he was too sagacious to come within reach of our spears, and our remaining gun was loaded only with small-shot, we scarcely knew how to despatch him. It would have been very dangerous to descend the ladder, for one pat of his paw was sufficient to tear any man's arm off; so we had to enrage him by shaking our lances in his face, and then pretending to run away, to induce him to follow us.

At last we succeeded almost too well; for with a speed of which I did not think a bear capable, he clambered up the ladder, and was making for the side of the ship with the sensible intention of escaping, when we closed in upon him, and caused him to stand at bay. He looked at us savagely, singling out one of us to attack, and then rushed upon David; but the old whaler's lance was ready, and the bear received a mortal thrust in his breast. Notwithstanding this, he rushed forward, grinning savagely; but David sprang out of his way, and another lance pierced him to the heart.

We had thus secured some very valuable prizes, and we even hoped there might be more of them below, provided they had not eaten up the stores on which we counted. No one liked to be the first to go down till we had ascertained whether the cabin had any more occupants. At last, none appearing, Terence with cautious steps descended the ladder, ready to spring up again should another bear show his face. Stepping over the carcass of the bear, which lay at the foot of the ladder, he looked in. Presently he shouted to us to follow, and we all quickly descended, anxious to see what damage the bears had committed.

Fortunately, all our stores had been returned to the lockers, and they had broken open only one, and had got hold of a jar of brown sugar and another of flour,



which, in their clumsy endeavours to eat, they had sprinkled about the cabin. We calculated from this that they had not been there long; for if they had, they would have routed out everything eatable they possibly could get on board.

As it was, our carelessness had been productive of more good than harm, for the skins of the beasts would make us some warm clothing, while their flesh would afford us food for a long time, if we could get no other fresh meat.

Our first care was now to construct a number of hand sledges, for the conveyance of our stores to our winter quarters. The small ones were made so that one person could drag them over the smooth parts of the ice; and on having to pass any rough portions, two or three persons might tackle together, passing one sledge after the other.

To carry the woodwork for our house, we were obliged to form a large sledge which would require nearly all the party to drag it forward. Taking care to close all the hatches, we loaded our sledges with provisions, blankets and some additional clothing, and set forward on our return to the bay.

## CHAPTER XXVI

WE travelled briskly along over the ice, our encounter with the bears affording us abundant matter for amusement. I forgot to say that, not having time to flay them, we had shoved them down the main hatchway, to wait till the next day. Now and then one or other of the sledges, not carefully constructed, would come to pieces, and we had to wait while it was being repaired; otherwise we got on very well, and, I suspect, faster than if we had not had them to drag after us. At length our journey was almost accomplished, and in a few minutes we expected to arrive at what we already had begun to call our home—it was, indeed, the only home we were likely to have for a long time to come.

We had rounded the rocky point, and were dragging our sledges towards our hut, when what was our surprise to see a group of human beings, clothed from head to foot in skins, standing round it, examining it apparently with



much curiosity ! On seeing us, they drew up in a line, and advanced slowly towards us down the hill. They numbered twice as many as we did ; and as they had arms in their hands, Andrew ordered us to stop, to see what they would do.

“ Show them that we wish to be friends, lads, and place your lances and the guns on the ground,” said Andrew.

We did as he directed, and instantly the Esquimaux, for such we saw they were, threw aside their spears and knives, and cried out, “ *Tima, Tima !* ” and advanced with outstretched arms towards us.

We uttered the same words and advanced also. We soon saw by the expression of their countenances that they were amicably disposed towards us ; and from their manner of behaving, we suspected that we were not the first Europeans they had met.

They all appeared comfortably clothed. The men wore deerskin jackets with hoods to them, to be drawn over the head ; their trousers were generally of sealskin, made to reach below the knee, and their boots were of the same substance, with the hair inside. Some of them had shoes over their boots, and an under-jacket of deerskin. The dress of the women was very similar, except that their jackets had long flaps behind, reaching almost to the ground, and were pointed in front. There were several children, who kept in the background, and they were all dressed exactly like the older ones ; and funny little beings they were, reminding one forcibly of hedgehogs, or rather of little bears and dancing dogs.

They advanced slowly in a line as we walked forward ; but when we had got near enough to see each other's faces they stopped. Whatever sign we made, they instantly imitated ; and there was a merry, good-natured expression in their countenances, which gave us great confidence in the friendliness of their disposition. Seeing this, we walked forward and put out our hands ; they did the same ; and presently there was as warm a shaking of hands between us, as if we were the oldest friends each other had in the world.

This ceremony being over, they accompanied us to the hut which we examined with some little anxiety to see if they had taken anything away ; but nothing was



disturbed. The few things also which had been left in the boat had not been touched.

"You are honest fellows, that you are!" exclaimed Terence, shaking them all round again by the hand, at which they seemed mightily pleased. We talked away at them and they talked to us for some time, making all sorts of signs and gestures; but at the end of it all we were not much the wiser, for neither of us could understand a word each other said.

However, we did not want them clustering round us while we were unpacking our sledges, and we were in a hurry to stow our things away before night; so Terence undertook to draw them off. He managed it by taking one by the hand, and making him sit down at a little distance and seating himself beside him; then, making a sign to the first to sit quiet, he led another to the spot, and so on till they were all seated. They then remained very quiet, looking on with an expression of the greatest surprise at the various things we produced. It was almost sunset when they got up, and again shaking hands, took their departure over the hills. By this we supposed that their habitations were at no great distance.

The next morning we were up by daybreak to return to the ship; and as we did not think it wise to leave our property without a guard, Terence and Tom were selected to remain, with two of the guns, to shoot any game which might appear, or to defend themselves if necessary. The ship had not been visited; and having laden our large sledge with some wood from the wreck for building the house, and two small ones with provisions, we set forward on our return.

Terence reported that the Esquimaux had again visited the hut, and had invited him and Tom, by signs, to accompany them over the hills; but that, on his shaking his head and sitting still, they had understood that he could not leave his post, and they went away.

As soon as we had taken some food, Andrew urged us to set about building our winter house without delay, lest the severe frosts should come on before it was finished. The plan he proposed, and which was adopted, was to divide it into two compartments, one for a storehouse, the other for our dwelling and cooking room. The latter was fifteen feet square and eight feet high, with a sloping roof,



and a hole, with a trap in the top, to let out the air and to serve for a chimney. All this would require a great deal of wood, besides the turf and stones with which we also proposed to build it. We had no means of forming windows; but, as we had heard it was always night during the winter, we thought we should not want them.

The next morning we were off again for the wood, as well as some bear's flesh and some of the other provisions. Terence, who managed so well with the natives, remained as before, and he reported that they had come, and seemed much surprised with the work we performed; that they had examined the tracks of the sledges and the additional stores, and then, after a great deal of talking, had returned from whence they came.

The following morning we were disturbed by a loud noise of dogs barking and men shouting; and on looking out of our tents, we saw our Esquimaux friends looming through the twilight, each of them accompanied by a troop or seven dogs harnessed to a sledge formed of the jaw-bone of a whale and sealskins. They came close up to us, talking very rapidly, and pointing in the direction in which the ship lay.

When we prepared to start on our daily expedition, they showed their evident intention of accompanying us. The Esquimaux laughed very much when they saw us trudging alone with our clumsy heavy sledges; and calling their dogs to stop with a *Wo Wo-hoa*, just as a carter does in England, they beckoned each of us to get on to a sledge behind each of them, and placing our sledges on theirs, away we drove. Off went the dogs at full gallop, they guiding them with their whips and their voices along the smoother portions of the ice. It was amusing and very exhilarating to feel one's self whirled along at so rapid a rate, after being so long accustomed to the slow movements of our own weary feet, and our spirits and courage rose accordingly.

As we drove along, I bethought me I should like to learn the name of my companion; so I pointed to myself, and pronounced my own name several times, "Peter, Peter, yes, I Peter"; and then I touched him, and nodded for him to speak.

He quickly understood me, and uttered the word *Ickmallick*; and when I repeated it, he seemed much



pleased. After this, whenever I touched anything, he always mentioned the name, and so did I ; and in that way in the course of our drive we had both of us learned something of each other's language.

When they arrived at the ship, they appeared very much astonished ; and we could only account for their not having seen her, by supposing that they had come from inland, or from the south, and that their fishing excursions never took them in this direction. Their astonishment was much increased when they clambered on board and descended into the cabin ; and they seemed almost afraid to touch the numberless strange things they saw. A looking-glass was hanging up ; and by chance one catching sight of his face in it, he was riveted to the spot ; then he began to move slowly and to make grimaces, which he continued to do, increasing the rapidity of his movements, till he broke into shouts and shrieks of laughter, till most of his companions assembling around him, they became convulsed in the same extraordinary manner.

As we had no time to lose, we covered up the glass, which quietened them ; after which we led them into the hold, when no sooner did they see the dead bears than they rushed up to them and began examining them minutely to see how they had been killed. After this they treated us with much greater respect even than before, evidently admiring the prowess which had enabled us to overcome so many of the few enemies with whom they have to contend. We immediately set to work to remove the lining of the ship, the bulkheads, and such other woodwork as we thought would prove useful to us in building our house. The Esquimaux gave us to understand by signs that they would carry it for us ; and as we threw it over the side of the ship they packed it on the sledges, each sledge carrying six or seven hundred-weight. They seemed to fancy that the ship was ours, and that we had come in her ; and of course we did not wish them to think otherwise.

Among the things in the cabin we had discovered a number of knives, hatchets, cotton handkerchiefs, and other articles, which had evidently been brought for the purpose of trading ; and some of them we now produced, and signified that we would bestow them on them, as



rewards for carrying our property. The way we did this was to load one of our own sledges; one of our men dragged it some little way, and then Andrew, pointing towards the bay, went up to him and gave him a knife or a handkerchief. As a hatchet was three times as valuable, he dragged the sledge three times before he received it. My friend Ickmallick's black eyes sparkled when he saw this, and his countenance was wreathed with smiles for two reasons—first, for the pleasure of comprehending what he meant, and also at the thoughts of receiving so large a reward for his labour.

We were so pleased with the honest countenances and manner of these people, that we had no fears about entrusting the wood and other heavy things to them, If we had known how scarce and valuable wood is to them, we might have hesitated more before we did so.

Among our other labours, we skinned the bears; and, reserving the more delicate portions of the meat, we gave the rest to them. To our surprise, they immediately began to eat large lumps of it raw, though we had lighted the caboose fire to cook our own breakfast, and offered to cook for them.

Some they divided among their dogs; and, as soon as masters and beasts had devoured their meal, they set off together towards the bay, leaving us still busy on board. When they were gone, we were not quite satisfied that we had done wisely in giving them the things. They might, knowing them to be ours, carry them off; or they might have misunderstood our signs, and fancy that we had given them to them. However, the thing was done, and we must abide by the consequences.

We calculated, at the rate they travelled, that they would easily make two journeys in the day; so we employed ourselves in getting loads ready for them on their return. We were not disappointed. In little more than two hours they made their appearance; and so well had they understood us, that those to whom we had promised knives or handkerchiefs for carrying one load held out their hands for them, while those who were to make three for the hatchets signified that they had performed part of their contract.

We now entrusted some of them with the bears' flesh and skins, and with some casks of salted meat; and we



also piled up, outside the ship, a load of wood for each of them, to see if they would come and take it. As soon as they were off, we followed with the more valuable stores; but, as we trudged slowly along, we envied their more rapid means of conveyance, and agreed that we would get them to carry us as well as our stores on the following day.

We had got about two-thirds of the way, when they appeared before us with a fresh relay of dogs. They had come out expressly to meet us; and, putting us and our loads on their sledges, away we trotted quickly towards the hut. We were much delighted when Terence informed us that everything had been safely delivered into his hands.

The next morning we set to work in earnest about our house, and, as we all worked, we progressed much to our satisfaction. During the day the Esquimaux arrived with the loads of wood we had left prepared. They did not show any intention of visiting the ship when we were not there to deliver the things to them; indeed, after watching us at work for a little time, they all went away.

I have not space to describe our proceedings minutely. We first got our storehouse completed and all our things stowed away in it; and then we built our dwelling-house, and surrounded it with clods of turf, fancying that we had constructed a very comfortable edifice. The Esquimaux paid us daily visits, and carried us to the ship to bring away whatever we required. We were always careful to shut down the hatches before leaving, to keep out the bears; and this they seemed to consider some religious ceremony, for they never attempted to visit the ship during our absence.

## CHAPTER XXVII

WE thought that we had known what cold was when the winter first began; but when a strong northerly wind commenced, having passed over either a frozen sea or sheet of snow, then we really felt how hard it could freeze. Even the Esquimaux kept within their snow huts, and we could not venture beyond the shelter of our walls, without instantly having our faces frost-bitten.

It was not till the last day of November that we entirely lost sight of the sun, and the long arctic night



commenced. But the night of that region cannot be compared to the dark, gloomy nights of more southern climes. Overhead the sky was generally beautifully clear, and the moon and stars shining on the snow gave a light scarcely less bright than that of day.

About noon, also, there was always a twilight, and in clear weather a beautiful arch of bright red light was seen over the southern horizon. Besides this, the aurora borealis frequently lighted up the sky with its brilliant hues, like some magnificent firework on a grand scale.

Early in February the sun again made its appearance, and the day, including twilight, might be said to last from eight o'clock to four, so that we had not a very much shorter day than people in London. The weather, however, was colder than ever, and we were less able to be exposed to the air for any length of time than during the dark months.

About the middle of March there were slight signs of a thaw, the snow being glazed over in the evening, as if the sun had had some effect on it. We also felt a sensible improvement in the temperature, and were soon able not only to wash our clothes, but to dry them in the open air, an operation which rather astonished our Esquimaux friends.

Early in May there was a perceptible twilight at mid-night, so that we felt the summer had once more begun.

The increasing warmth of the weather now enabling us to work out of doors for several hours together, it was proposed that we should begin to build a boat, to carry us home. I asked Andrew what he thought on the subject, for he had not expressed any very strong opinion either one way or the other. He replied that he thought there could be no harm in trying to build a small vessel; that we had an abundance of materials and tools, with provisions; and that if we could contrive to make her seaworthy, we might manage to reach one of the places to the south constantly visited by whalers; but if not, we must be content to wait till some ship might pass in the autumn.

He owned that he, for one, should not be inclined to venture out of sight of land; and that, provided we took a good supply of provisions with us, our firearms and powder, our harpoons and lances, after the experience



we had had, we could not come to much harm, even if we were compelled to weather out another winter in the arctic regions.

We got on very briskly with our vessel. She was not very slightly certainly, but we thought she would be strong, which was of more importance. After much discussion, we determined to give her a round stern, as more likely to withstand a blow from the ice. Her floors were very flat, which was very much owing to the shape of the timbers which we could not alter; but this was not a fault, as she would better have borne being thrown on the ice.

When we came to planking her, we found great difficulty in making the planks fit the ribs, as anyone conversant with ship-building may suppose; and we had to fill up under the planks in many places, to secure them to the timbers. We resolved that she should be very strong; so we almost filled her with beams, and double-planked her over after having caulked the first planking.

We had less difficulty in laying down the deck; but for the size of the vessel it was very thick and not very even. Provided, however, it was water-tight, we cared nothing for other defects.

We built up some strong, high bulwarks, not forgetting to leave ports of good size to let the water run off should a sea break on board us. We got two spars from the lower yards of the ship which served for masts, and set them up with shrouds, though, as most of the rigging of the ship was rotten, we had some difficulty in finding a sufficient quantity.

We rigged her with a fore and aft mainsail and foresail, and a square topsail and a fore staysail and jib, the bowsprit steeping up very much, so that when she pitched there might be less chance of its being carried away.

It is not an easy job to cut out a sail well, though there appears to be no difficulty in it; and I must own that ours did not look very well when we first set them; but by alterations, and making several patches, we got them to stand fairly at last.

We were prudent and made two suits, besides keeping a supply of canvas among our stores.

Our yards and gaffs were somewhat heavy, as we had no proper-sized spars to make them from. We found a



good supply of rope on board the ship, from which we fitted our running rigging. At last we had a vessel of some twenty to five-and-twenty tons, in all appearance ready for sea.

The last and not the least important task was to select the stores and provisions we should require, and to make the casks to hold the water tight. Had we had a carpenter or blacksmith among us, much of our labour might have been spared; but it must be remembered that we had only a few tools, to the use of which none of us were accustomed, and that nearly every nail we employed we had to draw from the planks and to straighten.

By the end of August our task was accomplished, and it was with no little satisfaction that we walked round and round our vessel to survey our work.

The next thing to be done was to move her over the ice to the centre of the bay, where about two miles off there was open water. When once we could get the cradle on which she rested on the ice, we thought our task would be easy; but to set it going was the difficulty. We tried every means we could think of, but the heavy mass would not move.

An ordinary-built vessel of fifteen tons could not have weighed a third of what ours did. At last we bethought ourselves of cutting away the ground under the cradle, and of placing slips of ice for it to run on. With infinite trouble and no little risk we succeeded in doing this. We gave a shout of joy as we saw our craft moving towards the ice. She glided slowly at first, but her speed increased. She dashed on; but on reaching the ice the impetus she acquired was so great that the shores gave way, and with great force she fell over on her side, and in spite of the stout timbers and thick planking, from the imperfection of our workmanship she was fairly bilged.

We were most of us differently affected. Some gave way to despair, and uttered imprecations on their ill-luck, as they called it—others actually wept with grief—while Andrew looked on with calm composure.

"Mates," he said, turning to those who were loudest in their impious expressions of discontent, "I have always said that everything happens for the best; and in this case, depend upon it, we shall find it so. From the damage our vessel has suffered from the slight shock



she received, it is clear she could not for a moment have withstood a common nip; and let me ask you, is it not better to remain here even for another year till a ship takes us off, than to be thrown on a sudden on a floe, with only our whale-boat to preserve us, and perhaps without time to save our clothes or provisions? Let us, rather than be discontented, believe that God, in this as in everything else, has ordered all for our good."

The calm, confident tone in which Andrew spoke had a great effect on his hearers, and not another word of complaint was uttered. While we were at work, we had not noticed that a breeze had sprung up. One by one we were retiring to our hut, when on looking seaward I observed that the whole surface of the ocean was broken into crisp waves; and glancing my eyes to the northward, there I beheld what no seaman could doubt for a moment were the topgallant-sails of a large ship.

I rushed into the hut where my companions were sitting, most of them with their heads sunk between their knees, brooding on our misfortune, except Andrew who stood with his arms folded, meditating on our future plans, and asking assistance whence alone assistance could be given.

"A sail! a sail!" I exclaimed. My voice aroused them from their lethargy. They looked at my countenance, and seeing that I was in earnest, like madmen they rushed from the hut. Every eye was turned towards the point I indicated. There, sure enough, was the sail I had seen; and without waiting to secure any provisions, we hurried down towards the boat, but Andrew called us back.

"We should not go empty-handed, mates, among our new friends, nor quit those who have treated us so hospitably without a word of farewell," he exclaimed. "There is yet time enough to do what we should do, and to pull out into the offing before the ship is off here."

Ashamed by his mild reproof, we went to the tents of our Esquimaux friends, who still remained near us; and explaining that a ship, by which we hoped to return to our country was in sight, we bade them understand that if we did not return, all the property we left behind was to be theirs. We saw tears falling from their eyes as they wrung our hands when we stepped into the boat, which they assisted us to launch over the ice.



We had loaded her with as large a supply of provisions as she could carry, and with our guns and the little ammunition which remained. Once in the boat, we gave way with a will, and pulled boldly out to sea, with our jack at the end of a spar of three times the usual length.

On came the stranger. Oh, how our hearts beat as we saw her hull rising out of the water.

On we pulled so as to place ourselves directly in her course, that there might not be a possibility of her missing us. Various were the conjectures as to what nation she belonged ; for it was soon seen she was not English by the cut of her sails, and, as she drew nearer, by her build. Some said Danish, others Dutch, and others French. .

The last proved right, and, as we got within hailing distance, once more the voices of civilised men struck our ears. We could not understand the question put to us ; but when we sang out that we were Englishmen, who had lost our ship, a voice in our own tongue told us to come on board. With joyful hearts we pulled alongside, and found ourselves on board the *St. Jean*, whaler, belonging to the port of Bordeaux.

The cargo of our boat, as Andrew had supposed, was not unwelcome, and secured us a warmer reception than we perhaps might otherwise have experienced. The *St. Jean* was nearly full, and was one of the few ships which had that year succeeded in reaching Pond's Bay ; so the second mate, who spoke English, informed us. Most of them afraid of the early setting in of the winter, had already gone to the south, and must have passed out of sight of land. Thus, had we not seen the ship, we should probably have had to pass another winter in the arctic regions.

I will not stop to describe our voyage to the south. It was in some respects favourable for the greater part of the distance ; but the crew were in a sickly state and our services were therefore of much value.

The captain and first mate both fell ill ; and I have reason to suspect that our reckoning was not kept with proper accuracy. Six weeks had passed since we had got on board, when a heavy gale sprang up from the north-west. . As the night drew on, it increased in fury, though, as we had got everything snug on board, we hoped to weather it out.



It was the opinion of the mates, for the master was too ill to attend to his duty, that we were well to the southward and west, and that we might keep away for our port. Instead, therefore, of laying to, we ran on before it. The weather was very thick, and we could scarcely see a hundred yards ahead.

Day was just breaking, and we Englishmen were all on deck together, from being placed in the same watch under the second mate, when Terence, who was forward, sung out with a startling force, "Land right ahead, land on the starboard bow!"

The Frenchmen understood the cry—all hands sprang on deck. The mate ordered the helm to be put a-port and the yards to be braced up, in the hopes of being able to beat off. It was too late; we were completely embayed. Land appeared broad on either bow.

To have beaten off with less sail than we carried would have been hopeless; but still there was more than the ship could carry. The masts went by the board. Fortunately, the mizzen-mast went first, followed by the main-mast, or the ship would have broached to, and every soul of us would have been swept from her decks. Andrew sprang aft and put the helm up again, calling on me to assist him; while the rest ran forward, to look out for a clear beach to run the ship on, for by this time we saw that we were too near to attempt to anchor with any chance of saving the ship.

We kept the helm a-starboard, and steered to a spot where there appeared to be less surf; but it was a fearful choice of evils. In two or three minutes the ship struck; it must have been on a rock, for she trembled throughout, and the fore-mast went by the board. All hands had run aft, knowing what must occur. Again she lifted and flew forwards several yards, but it was to strike with more violence; and the following sea, before most of us could secure our hold, came rushing furiously aboard, and sweeping everything before it.

I found myself lifted off my feet and whirled round among the foaming billows. I knew nothing more till I felt my arm grasped at by someone; and when I returned to consciousness I was on the beach uninjured, with Andrew leaning over me.

I asked for our companions; he shook his head sorrow-



fully. Three of them were missing—poor Tom and two others. Nearly all the Frenchmen were lost. We two, Terence, David and the two others, and six Frenchmen, were the only ones who escaped. Before the ship struck we had instinctively thrown off our shoes and the greater part of our clothing, so that we had nothing on but our shirts and trousers; and as none of the bodies of our unfortunate shipmates nor any clothes were washed on shore, we had no means of supplying ourselves.

We suspected that we had been cast away on the west coast of Ireland; and we found, on inquiry of some people who flocked down to the shore, that we were not wrong. The Frenchmen were anxious at once to proceed to Dublin, where they might get relief from their consul; and Andrew and the rest wished to go there also, to cross over to England or Scotland, and Terence because he belonged to that city.

I, however, was eager to return home direct. The yearning to see my parents and brothers and sisters again was stronger than I could repress. I felt sure, also, that Captain Dean and Mary, to whom I had given my father's address, would have communicated with him, and that I should receive some news of them.

With sincere regret I parted from that excellent man, Andrew Thompson, and with not much less from Terence and the rest; but the two first promised to write to me as soon as they got to their homes.

I set off alone, and a stranger, without shoes, hat, or jacket, to beg my way across Ireland. Some disbelieved the tale I told of my disasters, and turned me from their doors; but others gave me bread and meat, and the poorest never refused me a potato and a drink of milk, for their eyes, accustomed to real misery, could discern that I spoke the truth.

At length, just after dark, I reached the well-known gate of my father's grounds. I walked through, and with knees knocking together from over-excited feelings I approached the house. I looked up at the windows—not a light was to be seen, not a sound heard. My heart sank within me: I feared something must have happened—what, I dared not ask myself. I sat down on the steps, fearful of inquiring.

At length I gained courage to ring the door-bell. It



was answered by a loud barking of dogs from within, but no sound of a human voice. Again I rang, and after waiting some time, in my impatience I began to knock fiercely with my fists. I stopped, for I heard a window opening, and a voice inquiring from above what I wanted. It was old Molly Finn, the housekeeper. I recognised her in a moment. I told her who I was, and entreated her to tell me where my family were gone.

"Och, ye idle spalpeen, get along with ye, with your lying tales about being Master Peter, who has been dead these two long years or more," she exclaimed, in a voice of anger. "Get along with ye, I say, or I'll let the dogs out on ye."

"If you mean to let Juno and Pluto slip, you are welcome," I answered, my anger beginning to rise. "They'll at least know me, and that's more than you seem inclined to do, Molly."

"Just come nearer here, and let me ax ye a few questions, whoever ye are," she said, in a softer tone.

"Tell me first, Molly, where are my father and mother, and brothers and sisters—are they all alive and well?" I exclaimed.

"Well, then, there's no harm in telling ye thus much; they are all well, and gone to Dublin for Miss Fanny's marriage there to a fine gentleman who's worthy of her. And now, what have ye got to say?"

"Thank Heaven!" I exclaimed, and burst into tears, and sobbed till my heart was like to break. It was the giving way to affections long, long pent up, like the icy ocean in winter, within my bosom.

"Och, it must be Master Peter, whether dead or alive!" exclaimed the old woman, disappearing from the window.

I had some notion that bars and bolts were being withdrawn, and in another instant, a lantern was flashed in my face. It was instantly thrown down, and I found myself hugged in the dear old creature's arms, and several of my old four-footed favourites leaping up and licking my face, she coming in for some share of the said licking, and thinking it was me all the time returning her kisses.

Tim, the stable-helper, the only other person left on the premises, was now roused up from his early slumbers, and added his congratulations to Molly's. We went inside



the house and shut the door, and I rushed round to every room before I could sit down to eat. As may be supposed, there was no great supply of delicacies in the house ; but there were potatoes and buttermilk, and bacon and eggs, and what wanted I more ?

Molly had actually cooked my supper, and talked of making my bed, before she discovered how badly I was clothed. As for the bed, I begged she would not trouble herself, as I assured her I should have the greatest difficulty in sleeping in one, and I at last persuaded her to let me have a mattress and a blanket on the floor. I did, however, contrive to sleep, and awoke to find old Molly sitting by my side.

"Och, the dear boy, there's no doubt of ye now, Master Peter !" she exclaimed. "Ye talked of them all in your sleep, and looked just like yourself, ye did ; and I'll stand bail that no one but ye could have done that same."

I got a piece of soap from Molly, and going to a tank there was in the yard under the pump, by Tim's aid I soon made myself cleaner than I had been for a long time ; but we had a sad puzzle about clothes, for my father and brother had left none. Tim had only those he wore on his back and a coarse suit ; and money, I found, was scarce with Molly.

After hunting about in every direction, she routed out from an old chest some, with which she came to me in great triumph, saying they were my own ; and so I found they were, but they were some I had thrown aside, as being far too small before I went to sea. At last I bethought me, that as no money was to be had without much inconveniencing Molly, I would continue my journey as I had begun it ; and I would present myself to my family as I was, in the character of a seaman who had known the lost Peter, and had brought some tidings of him, thus breaking gradually to my parents the fact that I was still in existence.

I proposed, however, disguising myself somewhat, to prevent their recognising me. Molly liked my plan ; so, filling a bag with food, and borrowing ten shillings from her to help me on my way with greater speed than I could otherwise have made, I immediately started on the road to Dublin. Travelling sometimes on a car, sometimes in a



waggon, where I contrived to get some sound sleep, and oftentimes on foot, in three days I reached the capital of Ireland.

Scantly clothed and careworn as I was, I passed through the streets unobserved. I was on my way to the house my family had taken, when I observed, walking leisurely along, a person whose figure and gait I felt certain I knew. My heart beat with eagerness. For some time I could not catch a glimpse of his face ; so I ran on, and passing him, turned back to meet him. I was not mistaken—it was my kind friend, Captain Dean.

My heart beating violently, I walked up to him, and said, calmly enough, "I have sailed with you, Captain Dean ; but I don't suppose you remember me, sir."

"No, indeed I do not ; though I am not apt to forget those who have been any time with me," he replied, looking at me very hard.

"It's a long time, sir ; but perhaps you may remember a lad of the name of Peter Lefroy, to whom you were very kind," I said, my voice faltering as I spoke, for I was longing to inquire after Mary.

"I remember him well, poor lad. He was lost with a whole ship's company in the North Sea, upwards of a year ago. But what do you know of him ?" he asked.

"Why, sir, I know that he was wonderfully preserved, and now stands before you, Captain Dean," I exclaimed, no longer able to contain myself. "And tell me, sir, oh, tell me—Mary, where is Mary, sir ?" I blurted out, feeling that I could not speak again, till I heard of her.

"Peter—Peter Lefroy, my good lad !" he ejaculated, seizing my hand and gazing earnestly in my face. "It is you yourself. I ought to have known you at once ; and Mary—she would know you—she is well, and with your own sisters, for she is to be one of Miss Fanny's bridesmaids. But come along, this will be a day of rejoicing."

Captain Dean, on our way to the house where my family was living, to which he was bound when I stopped him, told me that he had some time back communicated with my father ; and that a month ago, having made a voyage to Liverpool, where he was obliged to have his ship repaired, he had come over to Dublin with Mary to show her something of Ireland. He had accidentally met my father,



and introducing himself to him, all my family had shown him and Mary the greatest kindness ; and he added that my sisters had formed a warm friendship for her.

My heart beat when I heard this : but I did not trust myself to say anything. " And now, Peter," said Captain Dean, as we reached the door, " I will go in and break the joyful news to all hands."

What a tumult was in my heart, as for ten minutes I walked up and down before the house, waiting to be summoned ! At length Captain Dean opened the door, and beckoning to me, pulled me in. " They all suspect the truth," he observed. " But I would not tell them till I had got you all ready to show ; so now I'll go back and tell them I have brought a lad who will let them know all about the long-lost Peter."

They heard him speak, and guessing what was the case, they came flying down the stairs ; and, before I had got through the hall, I was once more in the loving arms of my truest and best friends. Even my mother did not faint, though she sobbed aloud for very joy that her truant son had returned.

One sweet little girl hung back from the eager crowd. I espied her, and breaking through them, she received a not less affectionate greeting than had my sisters.

With my subsequent life I need not trouble my readers. " Well, Peter," said my father, after I had been washed and clothed, and had put on once more the appearance of a gentleman, " you have come back, my lad, poorer than you went away, I fear." He made this remark with the kind intention of filling a purse my sisters and Mary had given me.

" No, father," I answered, " I have come back infinitely richer. I have learned to fear God, and to trust to His infinite mercy. I have also learned to know myself, and to take advice and counsel from my superiors in wisdom and goodness."

" Then," said my father, " I am indeed content ; and I trust others may take a needful lesson from the adventures of PETER THE WHALER."